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# Editorial

The *Evangelical Review of Theology* is a new attempt to bridge the gap between the professional theologian and the thoughtful Christian communicator—pastor, theological student, educator or lay leader—reviewing a wide spectrum of evangelical thought and opinion.

In this second issue we have sought to keep a balance between contributions from all regions of the world, and we have drawn on a wide range of publications, including a translation of a significant article in German. We are anxious to print translation of articles written in other languages, particularly those not normally accessible to English readers—such as Norwegian, Portuguese, Swahili, Arabic, Indonesian and Chinese. To help our readers keep abreast of recent books, we are including abstracts of 30 book reviews. Besides reprints of articles and book briefs, original material is always welcome, such as the excellent missiological article on the 1916 Panama Congress in this issue.

We need your help in making this new international Review meet your interests in theological reflection. Suggest or send copies of articles, book or article reviews, or unpublished material, which you consider to be worthy of an international readership: some readers of the first issue asked for more exegetical material. We will be responsible for copyright permission, royalties, etc. Details of free subscriptions for those who contribute such material are given elsewhere.

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We ask for your patience with our initial printing difficulties in New Delhi. For this second issue we have changed our printer and expect more prompt delivery in the future. Thank you for your support.

Bruce J. Nicholls  
General Editor [p. 2](#)

## Contemporary Issues in Africa and the Future of Evangelicals

by TOKUNBOH ADEYEMO

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### INTRODUCTION

ON February 3, 1960, Harold Macmillan, former Prime Minister of Great Britain gave his 'wind of change' message at Cape Town, South Africa, after completing his African tour.

He said: 'The wind of change is blowing through this continent and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a Political fact.'<sup>1</sup> Change! This is the crucial word in understanding the dynamics of African history. Ferkiss, a prolific English journalist, in his book *Africa's Search for Identity*, published in 1966, describes Africa in these words:

Africa is a land where people are on the march, imbued with new faiths, especially nationalism, and armed with confidence in their destiny. It is a continent rushing from darkness into vigorous, often violent, awakening.<sup>2</sup>

Within the past two centuries, Africa has gone through three significant epochs. Like the period of the dark ages in European history, Africa went through her dark period when little or nothing was known about her in the West. The northern part of the continent was separated from the south by the veritable iron curtain of the Sahara desert. Her coasts were impenetrable and her forests, often called jungles, were impassable. Explorers at that time described Africa as 'the white man's grave'. Then came the period of colonisation, when, after the abolition of the inhumane slave trade p. 3 the tropical lands were sought for, partly out of curiosity and partly as sources of valuable raw materials. Once the conquest had taken place, the political and economic control was in foreign hands. 'The goals of African society were set by others, and Africa existed for the benefit of Europe. Naturally, this was a period of cultural dislocation.'<sup>3</sup> Christianity, that had failed on two occasions (4th and 5th centuries) to penetrate into the life of the indigenous peoples, finally had its way by the beginning of the 19th century. It came in different 'brands', a fact that jeopardised the unity of the Christian message. The traditional foundations of African peoples have been shaken by all the changes and everyone is asking the question, 'Who am I?' This search for identity sets the tone for a proper understanding of contemporary events in Africa. We shall examine four major expressions of this crisis.

## **CONTEMPORARY ISSUES**

### **The Socio-Political Revolution**

The growth of national consciousness has resulted in the rise of 45 independent countries in Africa, instead of only Liberia and Ethiopia, as in 1957. The transition time has been so short that the transfer from colonial dependence to national independence has been rough and uncertain. In all parts of sub-Sahara Africa, the handing over of political power was brought about by the pressures of an irresistible tide of nationalism. Consciously or unconsciously, Africans began defining themselves as such in contrast to those who oppressed or despised them. Since unity is strength, it became necessary for the leaders to seek political unity at all costs. In many of his public addresses and in his leading publication, *Africa Must Unite*, Kwame Nkrumah expressed the ambition to bring all African nations under what he described as 'United Nations of Africa'.<sup>4</sup> Though his dream was not totally realised, his advocacy of unity reached its climax at the creation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Cited by Ferkiss, V.C. in *Africa's Search for Identity* (New York: George Braziller, 1966), p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> M'Timkulu, Donald, *Beyond Independence: The Face of the New Africa* (New York: Friendship Press, 1971), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Nkumah, Kwame, *Africa Must Unite* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1963), pp. 12ff.

Organisation of African Unity in Addis Ababa in 1963. The OAU charter enunciates four cardinal principles of modern African p. 4 nationalism: national sovereignty, continental liberation, pan-African unity, and world non-alignment. Though instability, bloodshed, coups and counter-coups, and general unrest have marked our political arena in the last decade, the fact remains that the spirit of unity is the spirit of Africa.<sup>5</sup> This spirit is not limited to politics; it forms the bedrock for the ecumenical movement in Africa.

The nationalists' platform for independent Africa promised not only the creation of democratic states but also a better life. It promised an improved material aspect of life where everybody would share in a new prosperity. Such a propaganda appealed to the down-trodden common man who gave it hearty endorsement. Nkrumah's slogan: 'Seek ye first the political kingdom and all else will be added unto it'<sup>6</sup> became popular. This humanistic hypothesis was to result in three major realities: (1) unprecedented urbanisation with about 25% of Africa's 360 million persons living in cities; (2) a manipulative authoritarian government,<sup>7</sup> and (3) a secularistic society characterised by five features: a shift from permanence to change, from the universal to the particular, from unity to plurality, from the absolute to the relative, and from passivity to activity. Constant student demonstrations and military coups are indicative of dissatisfaction and loss of confidence on our political leaders. Southern Africa is becoming a buffer-state in the power struggle between the West and the East.<sup>8</sup> Millions of fellow Africans are on the run today as refugees.<sup>9</sup> A political Utopia is nothing but an illusion. Where will the African discover themselves? p. 5

### The Cultural Revolution

John Mbiti has rightly defined culture as 'a pattern of human life generated by man's response to his environment. This pattern is not static; it is always in a process of renewal, change, decay, interaction and modification.'<sup>10</sup> During the colonial period the African way of life underwent some incisive changes. The doctrine of racial superiority evidenced in politics, economics, education, science and technology, and religion and culture, was to be repudiated with the turn of the 60s. Throughout the independent African nations there is an awakening of interest in the traditional culture of one's forebears. Blackness ceased to be a symbol of inferiority and became a symbol of identity and pride. All means are sought to propagate the new ideology: music, painting, carving, arts and crafts, university degrees in African studies with a cultural emphasis, seminars and, of course, publications.

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<sup>5</sup> In Sept.-Oct. 1975 issue of *Africa Report* 20:5, President Idi Amin, present Head of OAU says: 'I want to unite them (the, Blacks) completely, not only in America and in Africa, but all over the world. In the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, there are over 83 million blacks and there are 23 million in other parts of the world. I have spoken at a high level within the OAU, explaining that we must unite with these people.'

<sup>6</sup> Alex Quaison-Sackey, *Africa Unbound*, 1963, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> 'The Changing Face of Africa,' *To the International Point*, Vol. 1, No. 19-20, Dec. 21, 1974, p. 33. The article indicates that 19 African countries are militarily ruled: 17 have one-party government.

<sup>8</sup> See 'The Soviets in Africa', *Newsweek*, April 4, 1977, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported in August 1976 that more than a million Africans are still living in exile in the 19 nations that have given them shelter (see 'Africa's Record on Human Rights: Millions of People on the Run', *U.S. News And World Report*, Nov. 8, 1976, pp. 39-40).

<sup>10</sup> John Mbiti, 'African Indigenous Culture in Relation to Evangelism and Church Development', in *The Gospel and Frontier Peoples*, ed. R. Pierce Beaver (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1973), p. 79.

*Festac '77*, which recently drew about 17,000 participants to Lagos, is an abiding testimony. The rise of Black Power in America at the same time as national consciousness in Africa cannot be mere coincidence.

Two unfortunate dangers face evangelical Christianity in Africa. In the first place, many Africans identify Christianity with imperialism. Western culture was assumed to be Christian culture. With this type of confusion, the deterioration of Western culture and the loss of political power, one is not surprised at the concentrated efforts of the nationals to uproot any form of foreignness. One national journalist is quoted as saying: 'Cultural revival is out to liquidate the work of the missionaries and their deception which made our people throw away their precious heritage.'<sup>11</sup> The second danger can be described as 'ecclesiological conformity'. The debate in many of our churches today centers round what type of music, arts, painting, architectural designs and officiating garments should be used. 'Should Jesus be given a black face in pictures?' is a popular question. Some of our theologians even claim that p. 6 'Jesus Christ has come to fulfill and not to destroy African religion'<sup>12</sup>. Evangelical Christians are duty bound not only to correct the errors rampant in our day but also to give a defense of their faith ([1 Peter 3:15-16](#)). As the late Dr. Kato said: 'The attitude of Christians towards cultural renaissance need not be negative. Culture as a way of life must be maintained. But where a conflict results (between Bible and culture), the cultural element must give way.'<sup>13</sup> A fellow student at Dallas Theological Seminary, Tony Evans, says it more succinctly: 'Black must be Biblical before it can be beautiful. Where blackness and Bible bump heads, blackness must go.'<sup>14</sup>

### **The Ecclesiological Struggle**

The winds of change and the search for identity have not left the Church in Africa unaffected. 'Despite murder, expulsion and repression of black and white churchmen, Christianity among black Africans is flourishing with dynamic new life.'<sup>15</sup> Churches of every denomination are jammed with young and old. Church authorities estimate that there are more than 100 million Christians among the 360 million black Africans. Ironically, the Church was not prepared for such unprecedented growth. Consequent on growth is a myriad of problems such as universalism, ecumenism, humanism, pluralism, and syncretism.<sup>16</sup> The growing tendency is towards what John Stott labels as 'a fruit cocktail of religions'.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, many disciples are caught in our evangelistic nets but remain untaught in our doctrinal institutions. How many average churchmen know that Christ alone saves? How many are convinced that the Cross that saves is able to keep day by day without help from the p. 7 native medicine man? How many understand the

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<sup>11</sup> Cited by Nathaniel Olutimayin in 'The Greatest Threat to the Church in Africa', *Africa Now*, July–August 1975, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> John Mbiti, 'Christianity and African Culture', a paper presented at PACLA, Dec. 9–19, 1976, cited by Richard B. Kabazzi in *Perception*, 15:8, April 1977, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Byang Kato, 'Theological Issues in Africa', in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 133 No. 530, April–June 1976, p. 146.

<sup>14</sup> Tony Evans, in a pamphlet entitled *Biblical Theology and the Black Experience* (Black Evangelistic Enterprise Inc., Dallas, Texas, 1977), p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> John Worrall, a reporter on African affairs in 'Why Christianity is Thriving in a Turbulent Black Africa', *U.S. News And World Report*, May 2, 1977, p. 63.

<sup>16</sup> For brief, precise definitions of these terms, read Eric Mallefer's article: 'Syncretism—Its Causes and Cure', *Perception*, No. 7, January 1977.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

implications of what some of our theologians are saying today about Biblical errancy, authentic saving revelation outside the Bible, and Christ's fulfillment of African expectations?

We evangelicals have spent a great deal of time and resources trying to condemn ecumenical activities in Africa to little or no effect. Instead of reacting against a movement, it is time for us to take initiatives. Nothing is wrong in unity based on Biblical principles. But we shall never sacrifice divine commands at the altar of carnal fellowship. Compassion is an intrinsic part of the Gospel, but we shall never allow political, economic and social liberation to replace the spiritual regeneration and reconciliation of man to God. Rather than moratorium, which is a manifestation of a proud carnal mind and false security, Biblical Christianity should maintain 'partnership' which is the legacy of the Apostolic church ([Romans 15:24](#); [Philippians 1:5](#); [2:25](#); [4:15](#)). The Church is of Christ wherever it may be located. This Christological uniqueness must be maintained, though forms and expressions of worship may take on local colors.

### **The Theological Debate**

The theological deficiency of churches in Africa has led to the rise of many sects, heresies, cults and numerous other false movements all over the continent. Several attempts have been made both by individuals and groups to combat the situation. The contributions of such scholars as Mbiti, Idowu, Sawyer, Danquah, Kato and many others cannot be overlooked. As a beginning of joint efforts, in 1969, the All-Africa Council of Churches published a book entitled, *Biblical Revelation and African Belief*. It was written against an African background with the main aim of showing the authenticity of the traditional beliefs based solely on the validity of general revelation. While one admires the scholarship of the work, one seriously disagrees with its universalistic presuppositions and objectives. Concentrated efforts are being made in our universities and other places of higher learning to produce theology for our churches. Ironically, like many of their writings, the theologies so far advocated or proposed cannot be called 'Christian' by any **p. 8** stretch of the imagination. Some of the unacceptable proposals include:

#### *African Theology*

This can be defined as 'a systematic interpretation of the indigenous life and religious experience of Africans as deposited in their oral traditions, myths, legends and the world around them'. It is a theology that emerges from African traditional religion with materials locally collected and collated. The product of such a task includes Idowu's book *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, Danquah's book, *The Akan Doctrine of God*, and Mbiti's works, *African Religions and Philosophies*, and *Concepts of God in Africa*. These men do not pretend to be writing Christian theology for an African audience and we should not credit such a title to them. One cannot imagine any Christian African turning to the above works for spiritual comfort, exhortation and illumination or for the defense of his faith. The reasons are obvious: apart from being subjective interpretations of fallible evidences, their purpose, as Idowu himself indicates, is to show the spiritual vacuum of the African people.<sup>18</sup> What the Vedas and Upanishads are to Hinduism, so will the works of these men be to African traditional religion. Generations to come may not have to go to oral traditions to find African religion; its monuments are in the making. African theology is not Christian theology. Unfortunately, its proponents are not only using Christian

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<sup>18</sup> E.B. Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*. Mbiti shares the same conviction in his *African Religions and Philosophies*.



terminology, they claim to be Christians. This is why Kato states: 'African theology seems to be heading for syncretism and universalism.' He goes on to say: 'In the African evangelicals' effort to express Christianity in the context of the African, the Bible must remain the absolute source.'<sup>19</sup>

### *Black Theology*

Tom Skinner, considered to be a moderate, defined Black Theology in these words: 'If theology is the study of God, when we talk about Black Theology we are talking about the study of God through p. 9 the black experience.'<sup>20</sup> Originating simultaneously with the Black Power movement of the 60s in North America, Black Theology, as a system, alleges that white theology has exploited the black man, and now turns the tables by calling for black economy, black power, black churches and black ideologies. It does not see any religious differences, since its philosophy is to attain political prominence. As a result it does not hesitate to align itself with the Black Muslim movement. James Cone, the leading mouthpiece and more radical advocate, said in a personal interview that the primary source of Black Theology is the experience of the American Black.<sup>21</sup> In its ecclesiastical pretense and with the seeming offer of identity, Black Theology is gaining some ground in Africa, particularly in the deep south. In my assessment, Black Theology seems to be a Marxist philosophy wrapped in the garb of theology.<sup>22</sup> In places of apparent quietness and political stability, Black Theology has no message. Actually, Black Theology is as foreign to Africa as alleged Western theology.

### *Theology of Contextualisation*

In cross-cultural communication, the theology of contextualisation is being pushed today. The term is difficult to define because it describes itself as 'dynamic-equivalence theology' comparable to the methodology employed by the Wycliffe Bible Translators. Though the system has much to commend it its end-product is less desirable. Undertaking the discipline, the craftsman does not look at his own situation from the standpoint of a text, but rather he looks at the text from the standpoint of his life-situation and existence. In essence the message can become relativistic, existential and situational. Human experiences can become normative rather than the inerrant and infallible Word of God. Localised theology could take on any form as the Theology of Liberation in Latin America, and could result in unprecedented consequences as evidenced in Germany in the 40s.

Contrary to above-mentioned brands, the writer proposes *Biblical p. 10 Theology in an African setting*. Biblical Theology can be defined as 'a discipline that scientifically expounds God's revelatory acts in their historical progressive contexts as deposited in the Bible and systematically organises its results'. It presupposes the infallibility and authenticity of the Word of God which is its primary source. It is not merely an exegesis of the text though this is indispensable to it, neither is it systematic theology which employs all and every available source of revelation. A student of Biblical Theology deals with the text before him in its historical and grammatical setting. Rather than

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<sup>19</sup> Byang H. Kato, *Theological Pitfalls in Africa* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1975).

<sup>20</sup> Tom Skinner, *If Christ is the Answer What are the Questions?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), p. 109.

<sup>21</sup> During question time after his guest lecture on 'Worship in the Black Church' at Perkins Graduate School of Theology, Dallas, Texas, April 1977.

<sup>22</sup> For an excellent critique of Black Theology, see Kato's article in *Perception* No. 6, October 1976.



superimposing his ideas, he humbly derives the theological categories from the text. He undergirds himself with such questions as: what is the lexical meaning of the word? what is the intent of the writer in using the particular word or phrase or concept? how did the immediate audience understand it? and what are its implications for contemporary situations? Such an approach to Scripture will both honor God and edify the saints. It will result in rightly dividing the word of truth in terms of expository preaching desperately needed in our churches today, and will provide the base on which to construct a systematic theology and an *apologia* for churches in Africa. It will be an illusion for the evangelicals of Africa to expect this type of theology from our universities: they are not set up for such a discipline. Our seminaries can do this only if their present standards are raised.

## THE FUTURE OF EVANGELICALS IN AFRICA

The question of the future is a very touchy one. One could be as extremely pessimistic as Tai Solarin who in 1961 wrote in the *Lagos Daily Times*, the newspaper with the widest circulation in West Africa, that Christianity has no future in Nigeria.<sup>23</sup> History has proved him wrong. On the other hand, one could be as overly excited about the zeal and enthusiasm of African Christians as Billy Graham, who pleads for African missionaries to America at **P. 11** the close of PACLA.<sup>24</sup> One thing is sure: the Church of Christ has come to exist in Africa regardless of Satanic opposition. Our Lord has said: 'I will build my church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it' ([Matthew 16:18b](#)). From this and similar statements about the Church in the New Testament, churches in Africa can derive their directives.

### The Threats to the Church in Africa

That the 'gates of hades'<sup>25</sup> will confront the evangelical churches in Africa goes without question. The distinguishing mark of the true Church throughout the ages has been Satanic opposition. Besides promoting the persecution of the saints, a fact which African Christians should be prepared for, Satan delights himself in sowing falsehood wherever the truth of the Gospel message is sown. This sober reality constitutes the threat to the Church in Africa. The following issues demand our attention: syncretism, sectarianism, secularism, humanism, ecumenism, universalism and pluralism.<sup>2</sup>

In the light of all these perils it is comforting to know that he who has promised is faithful and he will do it: 'I will build my church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.' Like the Reformers of the 16th century, evangelical Christians in Africa and the world in general must reaffirm their 'total, unconditional and exclusive commitment'<sup>28</sup> to

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<sup>23</sup> Tai Solarin is an influential Nigerian educator and writer. Classifying the Protestant Churches begun by foreign missionaries as 'imposed Christian churches', he contended that by 1984 their numerical strength would be half of what it was in 1954. See: 'Future of Christianity in West Africa', *Nigeria Daily Times*, Sept. 16, 1961.

<sup>24</sup> Roger C. Palms quoted Billy Graham in 'Africa: a mighty challenge', *Decision*, April 1977, pp. 8-9. Such a possibility is not denied. It is only hard to see its probability now in light of the internal struggles and perils of the churches in Africa and diplomatic uneasiness abroad.

<sup>25</sup> There are various interpretations of the phrase 'gates of hades'. In this paper it is used to denote the Satanic opposition that militates against God and all his programs.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> Eric Maillefer, *Perception*, No. 7, p. 7.

the authority of the Word of God. The theological battle in Africa will be won or lost in the areas of the truths concerning the inspiration, infallibility, inerrancy, and absolute p. 12 authority of the Scriptures.<sup>29</sup> It is imperative therefore for African evangelicals to establish (i) proper priority; (ii) proper perspective; and (iii) proper programs. I submit the following:

### **The Priority of the Church**

The priority of the Church is threefold: (a) in relation to God; (b) in relation to the Body; (c) in relation to the world. According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the purpose and duty of the Church is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. This noble function was exemplified by the life of our Lord, who in [John 17:4](#) declares: 'I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' Like her Head, the Church has the primary and fundamental duty of glorifying God. This she does by praising him ([Psalm 50:23](#)); by doing his will ([Galatians 1:24](#)); by acknowledging who he is ([Romans 1:21](#)); by bearing fruit ([John 15:8](#)); by suffering with him ([Romans 8:17, 30](#)); by loving one another ([John 13:35](#)); by her good works ([Matthew 5:16](#); [I Peter 2:12](#)); and by her purity ([I Corinthians 6:19-20](#)).

Next to glorifying God, the Church has the responsibility of edifying her members. To this end, spiritual gifts, talents and ministries are being bestowed on every genuine member of the Church ([Romans 12:6-8](#); [I Corinthians 12:7-11, 28-30](#); [Ephesians 4:11-12](#); [I Peter 4:10-11](#)). It is mandatory for the pastor-teachers to teach their members how to discover their God-given abilities, and to encourage them to exercise such abilities according to the measure of grace ([Romans 12:6](#)), to the glory of God ([I Peter 4:11](#)), and for the perfecting of the saints till we all come in the unity of the faith ([Ephesians 4:12-13](#)). The concept of 'Body Figure', wherein unity in diversity predominates, rules out selfishness, schism,, and moratorium. When we humbly exercise our gifts in love we have an abiding testimony before the watching world. In unity lies strength.

To the world, the Church has the responsibility of witnessing for Christ and discipling the nations ([Acts 1:8](#); [Matthew 28:19](#)). This does not preclude works of charity which are an intrinsic part of the p. 13 good news. However, caution needs to be exercised in this area. The Church is not an organisation for social and political asylum, nor are we to use divine resources to bribe people into God's kingdom. Since the Church is in the world but not of the world, she should not be indifferent to the social, political, and economic struggles of mankind; neither should she sacrifice her ambassadorial function at the altar of social involvement. Our Lord Jesus Christ liberates the total man: the material and the non-material. Thus he says: 'If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, you shall be free indeed' ([John 8:36](#)). The Biblical sequence begins with an internal spiritual regeneration and reconciliation of man to God, manifesting itself in an external physical transformation and reconciliation of man to man in society. The task of the Church therefore is to confront (not maintain dialogue with) the world with the claims of Christ as deposited in the Bible. This mission, central to the heart of God, his Son, and the apostles, must be the mission of evangelicals to the world. The New Testament Church was a missionary Church; and so must be ours. We must go forth (i) with a thorough-going Biblicism which does justice to the claims of the Scriptures, and (ii) with a Biblicism that is both *contemporary* and *relevant*.

### **The Perspective of the Church**

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<sup>29</sup> Dr. Francis Schaeffer stressed the same fact at the consultation of SIM directors held at the Emmaus Bible Institute, St. Legier, Switzerland. See *Africa Now*, March-April 1977, p. 15.

The theological prospects and religious movements in Africa resemble the world of the 2nd and 3rd centuries of the Christian era. There was a time of doctrinal strifes which called for ecumenical effort to formulate creeds and a positive Christian apologetic. Likewise, evangelicals in Africa need a system which will express theological concepts in terms of African situations. Theology in Africa should scratch where it itches. Such problems as polygamy, family structure, spirit-world, worship and the Christian's responsibility to the government need to be tackled by evangelical African theologians, and Biblical answers presented. Also we need Christian apologists like Tertullian, who will, without compromising, uphold the uniqueness of the Biblical faith and present a defense to the intellectual world. To accomplish such an objective, sound and advanced theological training becomes imperative. The price can never be too high. **p. 14**

In closing, it needs to be said that whatever organisational programs we decide to undertake must reflect our priority, perspective, and objectives.<sup>30</sup> We must, individually and corporately, do our utmost in the power of the Holy Spirit for God's highest and the good of mankind.

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## Contextualization: Asian Theology

by BONG RIN RO

*Reprinted from What Asian Christians Are Thinking with permission.*

IN THE first part of the paper Dr. Ro asks: 'What does contextualization mean?' He quotes from the Theological Education Fund Report *Ministry in Context*:

'Contextualization is not simply a fad or catch-word but a theological necessity demanded by the incarnational nature of the Word. What does the term imply? It means all that is implied in the familiar term "indigenization" and yet seeks to press beyond. Contextualization has to do with how we assess the peculiarity of Third World contexts. Indigenization tends to be used in the sense of responding to the Gospel in terms of a traditional culture. Contextualization, while not ignoring this, takes into account the processes of secularity, technology, and struggle for human justice, which characterize the historical movement of nations in the Third World.'<sup>1</sup>

Bong Ro comments:

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<sup>30</sup> The late Dr. Kato's suggested programs are still up-to-date and very appropriate. See (a) 'Theological Trends in Africa Today', in *Perception*, April 1973, March 1974. (b) 'Africa's Christian Future', *Christianity Today*, October 25, 1975, pp. 12-16. (c) 'Theological Issues in Africa', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 133:530, April-June 1976, pp. 143-52.

<sup>1</sup> Theological Education Fund, *Ministry in Context: the Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund 1970-1977* (Biomley, England: TEF 1972), pp. 19-20.

'With the trend of rising nationalism and upholding traditional values, modern evangelical missionaries have supported the concept of indigenization and now they are discussing whether they should support contextualization. John Nevius' indigenous principles of self-support and self-propagation stimulated Korean Christians and contributed to rapid growth within the Korean church.' p. 16

The author then points out some of the distinctive differences between East and West today in the areas of pre-occupational barriers; political systems; philosophy; traditional religious heritage; philosophy of history and theological beliefs.

## **TWO ASPECTS OF CONTEXTUALIZED THEOLOGY**

### **I. Methodology**

Contextualization can be applied in the methodology of presenting the Gospel. For example, the Christian message must be expressed in national, cultural patterns, liturgical setting, church music, dance, drama, and building structures. An Asian student in one of my classes said, 'We national Christians lack a cultural identity. For too long the de-cultured zombie image has stood, so much so that we tend to believe that this ought to be natural. Christians tend to divorce themselves from their own culture. The mission made a type of "evangelical robot" out of us.'<sup>2</sup>

In 1972, I visited theological schools in Burma where there has not been a single foreign missionary since 1966. While I was in Rangoon, the Burmese Council of Churches sponsored a three-day crusade. I attended the last meeting in a hall packed with 2,000 people. The Rev. Thra Mooler, Vice-Principal of Karen Theological Seminary, known as the 'Billy Graham of Burma', presented a program with nine of his students. The service included an interesting drama about Ko Tha Byu, the first Burmese convert who had been a gang leader killing more than 30 people before his conversion. Through the ministry of the Rev. Adoniram Judson, he became a Christian. I have never seen a Gospel drama presented so effectively, yet with such simplicity. About 20 people responded to an invitation to accept Jesus Christ as one's Lord and Savior.

### **II. Content**

Contextualization is also applied by some theologians in dealing with the content of the Gospel. They argue that God's revelation p. 17 came to us in the Scriptures through a specific form. In the New Testament, God revealed his truth through Christ of Nazareth who lived at a particular time in history. These scholars contend that the form of Christianity before A.D. 50 was Jewish and after A.D. 50 Hellenistic and that Paul, being a Hellenist, introduced a Hellenistic Christianity. In the same way, the Gospel must be also translated today into a particular form of culture. Consequently, we hear much emphasis on Asian Theology in major ecumenical denominational seminaries in Asia. More conservative evangelicals are reacting sharply against the concept of Asian theology while others are insisting on the necessity for it. Therefore, we must carefully define what it means and how it must be used.

It is essential that we carefully distinguish liberal and syncretistic Asian theologies from Biblically-oriented Asian Christian theology. Syncretism contaminates the Biblical message of the Gospel with other religious beliefs, but Asian Christian theology represents systematized Biblical theologies relevant to the Asian situation.

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<sup>2</sup> Reginald Ebenezer, *A Study of Church Mission Tensions and A Proposal for a Better Relationship*, Research paper by a Ceylonese student at Wheaton College Graduate School, May 1975, p. 9.

I categorize Asian theology under four different approaches: (1) syncretistic theology, (2) accommodational theology, (3) situational theology, (4) Biblically-oriented theology relevant to Asian needs.

1. *Syncretistic Asian theology*: There are Christian theologians and other religious thinkers who have tried to syncretize Christianity with a national religion (Hinduism, Buddhism, or Islam) in an attempt to contextualize theology into the national situation. The Commission of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches has sponsored a number of religious dialogues with the leaders of other living religions. Many of these dialogues have resulted in a mutual recognition of each other's beliefs. The scope of Hinduism and Buddhism is large enough to accommodate all other religions including Christianity. Sri Ramakrishna, founder of the Ramakrishna Mission, meditated on Christ, recognized Christ's divinity as an *avatar* (incarnation) of the Supreme, like Krishna and Buddha, and encouraged his disciples to worship Christ.<sup>3</sup> p. 18

Keshub Chunder Sen of the Brama Samaj, an ardent Brahmin and Hindu loader, highly regarded Christ and his influence:

'You cannot deny that your hearts have been touched, conquered and subjugated by a superior power. That power, need I tell you, is Christ. It is Christ who rules British India, and not the British Government ... none but Jesus, none ever deserved this right, this precious diadem, India: and Jesus shall have it.'<sup>4</sup>

Two notable Christian theologians can also be mentioned here: Father Klaus Klostermaier, a Roman Catholic theologian from Germany, who visited Vrindaban, one of the Hindu sacred places in India, to have dialogue with Hindu theologians. After his spiritual experiences with Hindu scholars, he testified:

'The more I learned of Hinduism, the more surprised I grew that our theology does not offer anything essentially new to the Hindu ... When we transpose the knowledge of Christ into the depth of *Brahmavidya* (knowledge of the Supreme and union with the Absolute) we begin to understand that, essentially, the stipulations set down by Indian theologians for the attainment of *Brahmavidya* are a first step towards knowledge of Christ ... Christ does not come to India as a stranger; he comes into his own. Christ comes to India not from Europe, but directly from the Father.'<sup>5</sup>

Dr. M.M. Thomas, Director of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society in Bangalore, India, and former Chairman of the Central Committee of the WCC, interprets salvation in terms of humanization by which man finds his true humanness which has been oppressed by social injustice, war, and poverty. He is very much horizontally oriented in his contextualization of the doctrine of salvation at the expense of the vertical relationship to God. Dr. Thomas says: p. 19

'I cannot see any difference between the accepted missionary goal of a Christian Church expressing Christ in terms of the contemporary Hindu thought and life-patterns and a

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<sup>3</sup> Swami Prabhavana, *The Sermon on the Mount According to Vedanta* (India), p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Cited, Stephen Neill, *The Story of the Church in India and Pakistan* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 121.

<sup>5</sup> Klaus Klostermaier, *Hindu and Christian in Vrindaban* (London: SCM Press, 1969), pp. 109–112.



Christ-centered Hindu Church of Christ which transforms Hindu thought and life-patterns within.’<sup>6</sup>

This concept of humanization in salvation underlined the WCC gatherings in Uppsala in 1968, the Salvation Today Conference in Bangkok in 1973, and more recently in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1975. Evangelical Christians around the world expressed their concern at Lausanne, in 1974, about the concept of salvation, and made a joint Declaration in the Lausanne Covenant.

Another syncretistic Asian tendency is illustrated in Professor Sung Bum Yun’s theology, *Vestigium Trinitatis* (trace of the Trinity). Dr. Yun, who is a professor of theology at the Methodist Seminary in Seoul, tried to relate the doctrine of the Trinity to the Korean mythology of creation. According to him, in the beginning there was a heavenly emperor, Hang-in, whose son was called Hang-ung. The father gave his son three royal seals to rule the world. The son descended into the world near Teaback Mountain in the central part of Korea by a divine tree with his 3,000 tribesmen to erect a divine city. He married a female bear who bore a son, called Tang-gun Wang-Kum. He built the first Korean dynasty, Tang-gum Chosen. The Supreme God, Hang-in; God’s Son, Hang-ung; and the female bear, a terrestrial goddess, were united to produce a human being.<sup>7</sup> Professor Yun says:

‘This is my interpretation: that the Tang-gun mythology may be an indigenized form of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity which was spread to northeast Siberia through the Eastern Orthodox Church and finally reached Korean soil ...’<sup>8</sup>

Evidence of syncretism with Buddhism has also been observed in Asia. A Christian bishop in Hong Kong was quoted by the p. 20 *Buddhist Digest* as saying, ‘I feel more and more that Kakyamuni is the nearest in character and effect to him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.’<sup>9</sup>

2. *Accommodational theology*: Accommodation is another subtle form of contextual theology. It considers prevailing customs and religious practices and accommodates good ideas from other religions. Matteo Ricci, Roman Catholic Jesuit missionary to China in the 16th century, chose the words *Tien Chu* (‘Heavenly Lord’) for God, which was the popular Chinese concept of God in the same way the Thailand Bible Society picked the word *Dharma* (law, duty, virtue, teaching, gospel) for the word *logos* in [John 1:1](#).

Dr. Kosuke Koyama, a former Japanese missionary professor at Thailand Theological Seminary and former Executive Director of the Association of Theological Schools in S. E. Asia, was invited to speak to my students in Singapore on his *Water-buffalo Theology*. He said, ‘Every religion has good things as well as bad things; therefore, we must keep good things of Buddhism in Thailand and talk about them. This will change our lifestyle and I consider this as evangelism.’<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> M.M. Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation* (Madras, CLS, 1971), p. 4; cf. Bruce Nicholls, ‘What is the Contextualization of Theology?’ *Theological News* (Oct. 1973), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Most Korean historians believe that this story has its origin in Shamanism.

<sup>8</sup> Sung Bum Yun, ‘Tang-Gun Mythology is Vestigium Trinitatis’, *Christian Thought* (Seoul: CLS, Oct. 1963), p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Buddha is the Way’, *Buddhist Digest* (Singapore, Buddhist Society, Oct. 6, 1972), p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Koyama’s lecture was given at the Discipleship Training Centre in Singapore, 1974. Cf. Kosuke Koyama, ‘Syncretism and Accommodation’, *OMF Bulletin* (Singapore, OMF: Oct. 1972), pp. 101–108.

I personally am able to accept this accommodation concept to a certain extent as long as the Biblical interpretation of God and the Word is understood about these words, *Tien Chu* and *Dharma*. I also do not have any objection to accepting some positive ethical teachings of other religions like Buddhism, and yet the basic question which evangelical Christians must ask is, 'Do these Buddhists need to be converted to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins?'

3. *Situational theology*: Another type of indigenous theology is what I call situational theology. This theology is exemplified in the 'pain of God' theology from Kazoh Kitamori, a Japanese theologian. His book, *Theology of Pain of God*, was written in p. 21 1946, right after World War II when Japan went through a time of devastation and suffering. And there, out of that context, he developed a Japanese indigenous theology. To him the 'pain of God' theology is central to the Christian Gospel. He started with [Jeremiah 31:20](#): 'Ephraim, my dear son? Is he a delightful child? Indeed, as often as I have spoken against him, I certainly still remember him; Therefore my heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him,' declares the Lord. Here the context of the passage is God suffering for Ephraim his son. Another translation goes: 'My bowels are troubled for him,' saith the Lord. The key word in the phrase is the Hebrew verb *hamah* which Kitamori interprets as 'pain'. He believes that God suffered for Ephraim and he suffers for his people. To him, the entire Christian theology is the theology of suffering.

There are four constituents in the pain of God. First, the fact of God's forgiving and loving of those who should not be forgiven and loved brings about pain in him. God's love for the sinful person creates the pain of God. He says, 'When the love of God bears and overcomes his wrath, nothing but the pain of God takes place.'<sup>11</sup>

The second constituent of the pain of God is simply the suffering: he brings out the thirst, hunger, exhaustion, fears, and excruciating sensation of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Third, since Jesus Christ is God, historical suffering is, therefore, a part of God's plan. The Father suffered when he sent his beloved Son to suffer and die. Fourth is the pain suffered by his creatures by virtue of his immanence. This is borne out by Jesus' last sermon ([Matthew 25:31-46](#)) in which he identifies himself with one of the least of those who thirst, hunger, and suffer poverty and imprisonment.

After explaining these four constituents in the pain of God, he goes into the relationships between God's pain and man's pain. Man's pain is the reality of the wrath of God against sin and is the result of man's estrangement from God. It also symbolizes God's pain; therefore, the linking bridge between God and man is pain. The phrase 'love rooted in the pain of God', appears more than p. 22 thirty times throughout his book.<sup>12</sup>

Two important factors in his 'pain of God' theology are observable. First, Dr. Kitamori took the tragedies of World War II sufferings and pains of the Japanese people very seriously and contextualized the Gospel to the living situation in Japan at the crucial time. He thus created an indigenous situational theology. In fact, an astounding statement he makes is that the Christian Church through the centuries had failed to discover the centrality of the Gospel until the Japanese Christian discovered the truth through the 'pain of God' theology.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Kazo Kitamore, *Theology of the Pain of God* (London, SCM Press, 1966), p. 10a. Translated from *Kami No Itami No Shingaki* (Tokyo, Shinko Press, 1946).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 27, 33, etc.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-35.



Second, Dr. Kitamori is also influenced by the dominant Buddhist concept of *Dukka* (suffering) and its role in solving human suffering and pain in order to reach *Nirvana*.

The key issue in the whole argument of contextual theology is whether the Biblical and historical doctrines of the Christian Church can be preserved without compromise in the process of contextualization. It is comparable to the ark of the covenant in the Old Testament. In Old Testament times, the ark was carried by ox-cart. Today in several Asian countries, it could be carried by rickshaw, horse, motorcycle or car. Yet the message of the ark must not be changed. Syncretistic theologians are trying to change the ark itself.

4. *Biblically-oriented Asian theology*: Theology in Asia has been taught by Western missionaries. The West has its own theological thoughts derived from its own cultural background, i.e. Calvinism, Arminianism, Death of God, etc. Yet in Asia we are facing different circumstances from the West. We must let the Bible control our theological reflection and work out its relevance for the living situations of Asia. Some of the main issues we are facing in Asia are Communism, poverty, suffering, war, idolatry, demon possession, bribery and cheating. Our theological emphasis must bear these problems in mind.

## CONCLUSION

Bearing in mind the differences between East and West, we **P.23** Asians desperately need to formulate Asian theologies which are relevant to Asians and yet based on Biblical doctrines. Syncretistic theologies which dilute the Gospel message are becoming more popular in seminaries throughout Asia.

There is a need to establish research centers where Asian theologians and missionaries can spend their time in research and in the production of materials that deal with situations prevalent in Asia today. Hopefully, our newly formed theological research centers in India, Hong Kong, and Korea will produce men able to tackle some of these issues in Asia. We need an Asian apologetic, not one transplanted from the West. Let us listen, evaluate, and be open-minded to different theological views in contextualization, and yet without compromise be faithful to the Gospel and proclaim it in love as the apostle Paul exhorts us:

Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love ([I Corinthians 16:13-14](#)).

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# The Christian Task in the Arts: Some Preliminary Considerations

by D. L. Roper

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DR. ROPER in Part I of his paper, *The Christian Task in the Arts*, reminds his readers that Christians are not exempt from the cultural crisis of our age. He suggests two requirements for the Christian who seeks to be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ and fruitful in his service in the Christian calling of the arts. The first is 'a down-to-earth appreciation of the concrete conditions of life that surround and pervade our very being', and the second, 'an appreciation of the fullness of the healing and mercy given so freely and richly through God's gracious action in Jesus Christ'. This calling can be expanded to further requirements: compassionate Christian insight into the complex problems of our culture, depth of insight into the incredible riches of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, a general appreciation of the inner character of the artistic enterprise and the development and mastery of the special technical skills relating to the particular art form. Such an enterprise must be developed within the context of a Christian community that is sensitively appreciative of the previous points. In putting man's cultural calling into Christian perspective, he asks the question which has been posed since the dawn of civilisation: 'Who is man?' He agrees with Calvin's opening words of *The Institutes*: 'The true knowledge of ourselves is dependent on the true knowledge of God.' Dr. Roper then proceeds to work out the implications for our cultural understanding. Man's place in creation is as 'a co-worker with God in respect of the cultural task of having dominion over the earth'. The Word of God in creation symbolises God's self-revelation and his rule over the whole *cosmos* as well as in Scripture, which alone has the power to give the wisdom that makes us wise unto salvation. Man as the *Imago Dei* stands as a unitary being in the centre of creation. [p. 25](#) His fall affects the entire creation. Redemption in Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is the only basis for the renewal and reformation of all things ([Romans 8:20-21](#); [Colossians 1:20](#)). This must be worked out in the context of the life-embracing community of the people of God. He concludes this section:

'... if we would read the New Testament aright, the calling to the people of God expressed in [Romans 12:1-2](#) was far from being one that involved a withdrawal from secular cultural tasks to undertake "spiritual" tasks. It has implications far beyond the call for an individual believer to be renewed in his moral life. It was nothing less than a calling to the whole redeemed community to allow its new heart allegiance unto Christ the Lord to reshape and redirect the whole cultural task that man had been given by God. In a spirit of full heart commitment unto Christ that enabled them more clearly to perceive every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord, they were to respond in quiet obedience in all that they did. No cultural or social task was to be unaffected. Men were redeemed for the purpose of serving and glorifying Christ on earth by achieving their God-given task of cultivating and having dominion over the creation in a renewed obedience to the Word of God.

'This is our task today; and only as a community of believers acknowledging Christ as Lord in all we do may we break free of the spirits of the age that so easily and unwittingly ensnare us at every turn.'

Against this background he turns 'to a consideration of art, with a particular interest in the slant of Christian art'. Part II of the paper continues:

## **TOWARDS CHRISTIAN ART—SOME AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS**

### **I. QUESTIONS OF STRUCTURE AND DIRECTION**

What is Art? What place should it play in the overall task of **P. 26** cultural development? How should we discern, evaluate and criticise art? In what sense can we speak of Christian art?

It is such questions as these that press themselves upon us if, with special regard to art, we would seek to be faithful co-workers with God in the whole of our lives. To wrestle with them Christianly is by no means easy, and we would do well to remember that any answers we come up with are but tentative steps in our life of faith to formulate a Christian aesthetic stance.

Although the Bible rarely mentions or deals with the problems of art as such, we may begin to appreciate something of the fundamental issues involved from a consideration of the following example:

‘See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ’ ([Colossians 2:8](#)).

Some Christian traditions take this verse to mean that philosophy as a cultural enterprise is to be avoided, as intrinsically opposed to Christ. Other Christian traditions, judging from their life and practice, would appear to pay no heed to it whatever, incorporating all manner of philosophy into their ways of life. Moreover, the confusion that exists amongst Christians on this particular cultural activity would be typical of that which exists in art as well as most of man’s other cultural tasks within the creation. It is my contention that when consideration is given to the artistic task on the part of Christians, the basic confusion that exists arises from a failure to distinguish between structural problems and directional problems. Moreover, this usually arises from an inadequate appreciation of the Biblical view of man’s place in creation, and the influence of the Fall and redemption upon man’s cultural calling, resulting either in a pietistic world-flight from cultural activity or in a synthesist worldly-compromise with the principalities and powers that at present wreak havoc over the world order.

Was Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, warning the people of God throughout the ages from ever indulging in philosophy of any kind? This would be extremely unlikely, since Paul’s injunctions were invariably related specifically to the concrete conditions **p. 27** of the people to whom he was writing. It is more likely that Paul was warning the Christians at Colossae against the particular philosophy current at the time, i.e. gnosticism, because it was alien and opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We may learn from this example, therefore, that Scripture calls us to be discerning in our dealing with the cultural forms that surround us. How are we to exercise this discernment? Basic to a Christian answer to this question, I think, is the distinction between structure and direction.

Issues of STRUCTURE are those which set different features of God’s creation off from one another. In respect of man’s task of cultivating God’s creation, for example, they have to do with such matters as: What makes the State different from the Church? What is the State and what is its task in human society? What makes art different from science? What is the task of art in human life? What is philosophy and what is its place in human life? etc. We may, of course, ask whether or not certain cultural activities, such as organized crime and prostitution, have a legitimate place at all within man’s task of exercising dominion over creation. However, to grapple effectively with all these problems, it is of some importance to distinguish between the *structural* issues and the *directional* issues involved, for only in such a framework have we an integral appreciation of our diverse tasks in life. Moreover, once we recognise this is the basic distinction to be made in regard to cultural and social life, it becomes obvious that few structural activities *per se* are to be

excluded from the Christian life. The problem is rather that legitimate callings have been *wrongly* cultivated: i.e. the problem is rather of the *direction* in which men have shaped or cultivated the structures of God's creation.

Issues of DIRECTION relate to the question of *obedience* to the Word of God in the manner in which men respond to their task of cultivating God's creation. In this respect, it is helpful to think of it applying to two facets or dimensions of our existence—the first relating to the religious commitment of our hearts and the second to the creational norms which our concrete lives are to realize. From the former of these, man's cultivating activity gains its characteristic spirit or stamp, and as a consequence we speak of 'the spirit of rationalism', 'the spirit of Nazism', 'the spirit of radicalism', 'the spirit of the counter-culture', 'the spirit of the p. 28 Renaissance', or 'the spirit of the Reformation'. In this respect the Scriptures call us to a radical discerning of the spirits ([1 John 4:1–3](#)), and to be circumcised of heart ([Deuteronomy 10:16](#); [Jeremiah 4:4](#); [Romans 2:28–29](#)). From the latter of these arise the degree of obedience to the Word of God (in respect to such norms as faithfulness, honesty, justice, economy, coherence) in relation to the specific manner in which we cultivate our personal characters, our relationships with other people, our family life, our homes, our programme of education, our business life, our politics, the State, the Church, art, science, philosophy, theology, science, leisure, etc.

Thus, in the above example cited from Paul's epistle to the Colossians, we should ask ourselves the question: 'Was the author saying that philosophy, structurally, had no legitimate place in man's task of unfolding the creation, or was he saying that the particular philosophy (gnosticism in this case) was directionally wrong because it was not obedient to the Word of God in Christ?' The fact that the passage quoted does itself warn against philosophy, *according to human tradition and elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ*, is surely indicative that the latter of these alternatives is what is meant. It is my conviction that what we have discussed here in relation to philosophy applies equally to art, and it is to a consideration of this that we now turn.

## II. STRUCTURE: THE NATURE OF ART

What distinguishes an art object? When do we have art and when do we not? What justifies a statement like 'That's not even art!' as being more than a subjective expression of dislike? This issue has engaged the attention of many thinkers throughout the ages, and although we may learn from their efforts, we should not delude ourselves into thinking that their religious stance towards life does not affect their insight into this very difficult question. The approach taken here is basically that taken by C. Seerveld, in his book, *A Christian Critique of Art and Literature*, which is, to my mind, the most significant contribution made so far to a Christian view of aesthetics. P. 29

### 1. Some Blind Alleys

#### (a) Beauty

There exists a long tradition in the West that would say that the hallmark of art is beauty. In many ways this characterization of art is today a great embarrassment, since few would claim much modern art was beautiful. Is it not, nevertheless, still art? However, if art can exist without the hallmark of beauty, then the latter is not structurally a distinguishing feature of art.

The idea of beauty goes back at least to Plato, a thinker whose influence upon the development of Western culture is scarcely appreciated by modern man. Beauty, for Plato, is a matter of measure and proportion; a thing of beauty is one with a pleasing, fitting

harmony. As a Greek impressed with the balanced order of the *cosmos*, the pythagorean-trained Plato posited a 'capital B Beauty' somewhere beyond the heavens. This divinized Absolute Beauty had strong mathematical overtones of variety in unity and symmetry.

The Roman Cicero modified Plato's Beauty theology so that it was conceived of as an ideal pattern for thought. Every rational person was therefore considered able to recognise an apt configuration of parts as deserving the title 'beautiful'.

Egyptian-born Plotinus emphasized that Plato's mystique of Beauty was homesickness for the God with which it had once been One.

The influence of this tradition was taken into Christianity by Augustine who, under the spell of Cicero, Victorinus and Plotinus, developed a Platonic mathematical objectivism which denied that anything which could be, might be anything other than beautiful. Particularly in his early writings he claims such things as 'even evil and its punishment fit harmoniously into the just mosaic of God's good creation' (Confessions VII, 18–19).

Although Thomas Aquinas was more under the spell of Aristotle than of Plato, he nevertheless made room for the 'beauty theology' developed by Augustine, significantly limiting it to the sphere of 'nature' which was unaffected by 'grace'. The Renaissance revolted against the scholasticized synthesis so effectively accomplished by Aquinas, turning once more to the thought of Plato for much of its orientation. However, the secularization begun by p. 30 Aquinas continued, with 'beauty' thus loosed from many of its synthesized Christian overtones.

By the time modern British 'common sense' philosophy had divorced beauty from any Christian theological associations, it had become subjectivized to a harmonious human feeling that may be stimulated by certain objects we happen to call 'art'.

Most significant to this thumb-nail sketch of the chequered history of thought about beauty is the way it has moved from a divinized ideal transcending temporal experience to a subjectivized feeling beyond which it has no cosmic reality. Moreover, these changes in fashion regarding thought about beauty are related to the history of the executed art works themselves. However, to investigate that in any detail would go beyond my present purpose of simply emphasizing that although beauty has often been considered to be both the ideal and hallmark of art, it is an unsuitable structural criterion for characterizing art.

### *(b) Inspiration*

Comparable with the influence upon art of his thought on Beauty has been Plato's conception of inspiration in art.

'We seem to be pretty well agreed that the artist knows little or nothing about the subjects he represents and that his art has no serious value—and this applies to all tragic poetry, epic or dramatic.'<sup>1</sup>

'All the good epic poets utter all these fine words not from art but as inspired and possessed, and the good lyric poets likewise ... seeing then that it is not by art that they compose and utter so many fine things about the deeds of men—as you do about Homer—but by divine dispensation, each is able only to compose that to which the Muse has stirred him ... for not by art do they utter these things, but by divine influence.'<sup>2</sup>

In respect of art, Plato's writings are apt to be rather confusing. He sometimes says, especially in *The Republic*, that art is an intrinsically inferior activity of men—because it can only hope to give imitations of imitations and thereby be three steps removed from

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<sup>1</sup> Plato, *The Republic*.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Ion*.



p. 31 the ultimate, ideal reality. In other places, such as in the above quote from *Ion*, he appears to recognize that all the good epic poets are indeed dealing with a more immediate representation of the universal reality. However, his complaint is that this is being achieved not through the knowledge and apprehension of the poets. They remain completely ignorant of the reality they are representing whilst the Muse inspires them. In this way Plato was responsible for the view of 'inspiration' in art, even though he himself disapproved of it. Later thinkers—especially those showing some influence of Neoplatonism—were to look with approval upon the inspiration of the artist. This is all the more significant, for it is not hard to visualize the way in which a Christian gnosticism would wish to claim this sort of inspiration for cultural activities in our day.

The view of the artist as a prophet divinely inspired has had a particularly strong influence through the 19th century Romantic Movement. 'God is the direct cause of all art,' said Friedrich von Schelling. Matthew Arnold expressed essentially the same view in a watered-down Anglo-Saxon version when he said, 'More and more, mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry our science will appear incomplete: and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry.'

In such a conception, art as 'inspired utterance' replaces the Word of God as the central revealer of the meaning and purpose of life. Moreover, taken in conjunction with the nihilism and despair that has been a central theme of contemporary art, we may realize that its nihilistic character is profoundly religious: the modern artist is literally the *prophet of no meaning and no purpose*. The religious connotations of the 'Pop' super-star are again clear.

Moreover, is it not true that much very ordinary and pedestrian art is still art? If we grant that this is so, then whatever is really involved with this matter of 'inspiration', like beauty, cannot be an essential structural feature of art.

## 2. Essential Features of Art

### (a) Symbolic Objectification

The first essential feature of a work of art is that it is an attempt p. 32 to objectify symbolically certain meaningful aspects of some feature of life in God's creation. The *cosmos* we live in is God's creation and as such is entirely meaningful. Moreover, we are aware of a number of ways in which its meaning functions symbolically. In nature we are aware of the symbolic meaning of light and darkness, of the 'menacing' of heavy clouds, of the power and 'judgment' of thunder, of the quiet aloneness of sparse empty spaces. In human life we are fully aware of the way symbolic gestures function to reveal characteristics of certain persons and certain walks of life. First of all, therefore, we should realize that symbolic meaning is a feature of the way God's created *cosmos* functions. In art, men attempt to objectify symbolically certain meaningful aspects of some feature of life by highlighting these from their integral experience of God's creation into some culturally fashioned form or style, thus producing art forms.

### (b) Aesthetic coherence

If the desired meaningful aspects of reality that have caught the artist's attention are to be faithfully represented in the artist's objectified symbol, then the latter must have an aesthetic coherence. By this I mean that the work of art must embody an internal symbolical consistency, whilst faithfully representing the unity and diversity of the meaningful aspects under consideration. To achieve this the artist has to select carefully those features of his total experience of God's creation so that when they are assembled

together, subject to an aesthetic coherence, the final result will indeed serve to highlight the meaningful aspects of life that have caught his attention.

### *(c) Imagination*

‘He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts’ ([Luke 1:51](#)).

Christians have very often been suspicious of the imagination, and very often for good reason. However, I wonder whether the answer of trying to repudiate or deny the validity of the imagination has been the right one. The more Biblical approach is first to discuss the structural questions that attempt to discover the God-given [p. 33](#) place of the imagination within our lives, and subsequently to realize the ways in which the various forms of idolatry may delude man in the vanities of his own imagination.

We should first of all be aware of the connotations which the very word ‘imagination’ has for us today. Beginning with Dada and Surrealism, modern art has been very strongly influenced by a bizarre gnostic-like mysticism that would place the imagination in an unreal world of dream and fantasy that supposedly lies deep within man’s subconscious, and which has little relation to the wholeness of God’s created *cosmos*. Although I think that the world of the imagination is one of the essential features of art, I certainly do not think that its inner character is intrinsically wrapped in such psychological conceptions.

God’s creation is rich in meaning. Unfortunately, we live in the background of a culture that has defied the scientific attitude of apprehending the meaning of the creation. Such knowledge is supposed to be ‘objective’ whilst any other pretensions to knowing are considered as ‘subjective’. This kind of antithesis between ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ has to be rejected if we would think Christianly. It is the product of a humanistic view of life.

Our everyday experience of God’s creation is one of a rich, integral character that is all too easily forced into the mould of a scientific reductionism. This indeed we should repudiate. Not, however, by seeking some subjective, gnostic-like knowledge that wells up from ‘the depths of our unconscious’. Rather, we should understand that both the scientific and the imaginative artistic ways of knowing should be seen as having a validity within the variegated meaning of God’s created *cosmos*. Moreover, as ways of knowing, they are both anchored in the integral way in which we experience God’s creation day by day. The sciences have the task of prying into the various functional processes within God’s creation, yielding a knowledge and insight that is abstract, theoretical and partial, while the imaginative way of knowing abstracts elements from our integral experience for the purpose of giving insights into reality that are comprehensive and total. The implications of this view of the imagination is that although it is different from the scientific way of knowing, it nonetheless bears as genuine a relation to the integral fullness of God’s creation as does the scientific attitude of knowing. [p. 34](#)

## **III. DIRECTION: THE SLANT OF CHRISTIAN ART**

As Christians, we would do well to remember that no cultural activity should be seen as lying outside the circle of our God-given task of exercising dominion over the creation in obedience to the Word of God. To see art or science outside this circle and to cultivate them in such a spirit is idolatrous in the sense that they become things in themselves, cut off from God’s sovereign rule over his creation. However, this does not mean that Christian art should be identified with ‘sacred’ or ‘church’ art, nor does it mean that art coming from the pen or brush of an artist who is not a Christian cannot in a very real way be considered as reflecting something that gives valid insight into God’s creation, and so qualify in some measure for the adjective Christian. In evaluating art, primacy of attention should always be given to the realities symbolized in the work, and the manner of their



symbolization. Only to the degree to which the personal life of the artist enables us to appreciate these things further should they be allowed to influence the way their art is evaluated. Nor is evaluation of art ever merely a matter of personal taste. Personal preferences are certainly permissible, but in a world that is meaningfully structured by the Word of God in all its aspects, Christians of all people should be concerned to sustain the objectivity of aesthetic judgement.

Our tentative exploration into the development of a Christian aesthetic stance have so far been addressed to the structural questions. As such, I have suggested that a work of art is an object that has been culturally formed by man so that it embodies an aesthetically coherent symbolic objectification of an imaginative insight into certain meaningful aspects of some features of reality.

Our next task is to reflect upon those matters that have to do with the directional character of works of art: those issues which have to do both with discerning, evaluating and criticising art, and, hopefully, giving some insight into the slant of Christian art.

I would like to do this first by discussing some false ideas as to what Christian art might be thought to mean, and second by exploring what I consider to be the slant of its positive characteristics. [p. 35](#)

## **1. Some Blind Alleys**

### *(a) Art dealing with 'Christian' or 'Eible' subjects*

This is a common conception of what Christian art might be. There are, however, two basic objections I have against this view. First, what is meant by a 'Christian' subject as against one which is not so? To exclude the very real results of sin from Christian artistic reflection is not guided by Biblical practice. Rather, it is the result of a moralism that is imposed on the Bible. Moreover, the very way of formulating the problem in terms of subjects which are 'Christian' and those which are not is a denial that all of creation is God's and therefore fit to be a 'Christian' subject. Secondly, even when the word 'Christian' is applied to art on Biblical subjects, there are very many examples of works of art which do not symbolically objectify the meaning of these subjects in a Biblical way. Many paintings, many films, many musical works could be considered in this light. Schonberg's *Moses and Aaron*, and Rice and Webber's *Superstar* provide two immediate examples.

For these reasons, therefore, 'Christian' art cannot be defined merely from a consideration of the subject it chooses for its symbolic objectification.

As special categories we would consider here art which is to have a specifically evangelistic or church function. Simply because art is to have these functions, the completed art objects themselves will symbolically objectify the meaningful aspects of the subject-matter in a spirit which is faithful to the Word of God.

The nature of Christian art depends less upon the subject than upon the spirit, the wisdom and understanding of reality that is symbolically objectified in the treatment of the subject.

### *(b) Art undertaken by Christians*

Is 'Christian' an epithet to use of any work of art that is undertaken by someone who confesses the name of Christ? Christians, however full of faith they may be, can still make bad art. They may be sinful and weak, they may have little appreciation for the task that God intends art to play in life, they may have little technical ability. On the other hand, a person who does not confess the name of Christ may have a far greater appreciation of the God-given norms for artistic activity. Hence, a work of art is not good [p. 36](#) simply when we know the artist to be a Christian. It is good when we perceive it to be good.

(c) 'Great' art

Is 'Christian' art simply art that we somehow perceive to be 'great' or 'good'? To have apprehended the structural features of art in a way that we recognise to be good is certainly an important criterion for evaluating art. However, art is a human creation, embodying a spirit, an insight, a perspective, a wisdom in its execution. Great art may therefore embody a spirit which is hostile to God, thus misconstruing and misshaping the meaningful aspects of the whole of reality. Clearly, then, 'Christian' art cannot be equated with 'great' art.

In a sense, Christian art is nothing special. It is sound, healthy, good art. It is art which is in line both with its own God-given structural characteristics and also with reality in general. In this respect it is art with a certain slant.

## 2. Essential Qualities of Art

There are a number of different ways in which the slant of Christian art may be approached. C. Seerfeld in his *Christian Critique of Art and Literature* calls it the 'surd of joy and sin'. This is an excellent description of it in a minimum number of words. I will attempt to explore this general thought in three variations.

(a) *The light of joy and compassion that faces tribulation*

There would be little objection to the statements: 'In this life we have tribulation', 'in Christ we have joy', 'a mark of the Christian is his compassion'. However, what is crucial to the Christian view of life, and hence any Christian artistic witness, is the way such features are woven into a coherence. If the aspects of joy and compassion are not woven in relation to a realistic wholeness that is intensely aware of the scars of sin and tribulation even in the finest of human effort, then the result is a romantic sentimental art, not Christian art. It is very important for us to bear these features in mind, since Western art over the last 150 years has been marked by an inherent lack of a Christian coherence in this respect. Serious art has trodden the direction of heavy pessimism. More popular art [p. 37](#) has trodden the path of romantic sentimentality. The artistic efforts of the Christian community have very largely been caught up with the latter. However, an integrally Christian art cannot accept the bias towards shallow sentimentality that marks the mainstream of European culture. Nor can it accept the despairing realism that marks so much of the 20th century serious art. It should record, with humble Old Testament humanness, the just mercies of God upon our broken yet glorious world. This calls for a symbolic objectification that everywhere speaks of a light of joy and compassion that faces the realities of tribulation. Generally speaking, the art associated with the European Reformation of the 16-17th centuries is characterized by this spirit.

(b) *The strain between a rest in Christ and a fight with sin*

'I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world' ([John 16:33](#)).

The crucial issue in regard to the slant of a symbolic objectification purporting to be Christian is again not simply one of recognizing these features as two aspects of the Christian faith. Rather, it is the way they are interrelated and woven into a coherence. To portray the peace of Christ as something removed from the conflicts of life brings it variously within the orbits of 'classic', 'mystical pantheistic', and 'pietistic escapist' art. To portray something of the struggle of life in the absence of a restful contentment in Christ invariably brings it within the orbits of revolutionary, romantic, expressionistic or anarchistic art.

A Christian artistic witness should symbolically objectify the real life-situation in which a contented restfulness in Christ is engaged in mortal conflict with the sin that besets this world until the final judgment.

*(c) The Scandal of the Great Divorce*

‘Blake wrote on the marriage of Heaven and Hell. If I have written of their Divorce, this is not because I think myself a fit antagonist for so great a genius, nor even because I feel at all sure that I know what he meant. But in some sense or other the attempt is based on the belief that reality never presents us with an absolutely unavoidable ‘either-or’; that, granted skill *p. 38* and patience and (above all) time enough, some way of embracing both alternatives can always be found; that mere development or adjustment or refinement will somehow turn evil into good without our being called on for a final and total rejection of anything we should like to retain. This belief I take to be a disastrous error.’<sup>3</sup>

The Scriptures set forth a view of reality that is rooted in a Great Divorce. There is an eternal antithesis between Christ, and the Evil One, between truth and falsehood, between good and evil, between justice and injustice.

This antithesis should be apparent if our art is to have a Christian slant. Within the context of a fallen world, however, one does not witness to such an antithesis by avoiding certain ‘unsavoury’ subjects. Rather, as in the Scriptures, the antithesis should be demonstrated in the way such subjects are treated.

The Scriptures do not hide the hideous sins of David—described as a man after the Lord’s own heart. Nor do the Scriptures condone David’s acts. They are set irrevocably within the context of the Great Divorce referred to above. This example is typical. The Bible does not hesitate to deal with subjects like prostitution, drunkenness, adultery, sorcery and idolatry, simply because they are very real to the lives of fallen men. However, the way they are dealt with is the exact opposite of ‘Playboy’ or ‘Truth’. Christian art should steer clear of depicting virtue and vice in moralistic terms. It should take care to show both that even the best and godly men have foibles and weaknesses and even the worst men have touches of tenderness and nobility. Moreover, it should witness to the fact that the Great Drama of Life that forms the background to the lives of us all is one in which the Kingdoms of Christ and Satan wage mortal combat over the whole created order.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

In the Introduction, I commented that a revitalization of the arts in the power of the Gospel required: first, a compassionate insight into the complex problems of our culture; secondly, a depth *P. 39* of insight into the incredible riches of the grace of God in Jesus Christ relating to the *whole* of our lives; thirdly, a general appreciation of the inner character of the artistic task; fourthly, the development and mastery of the special technical skills relating to the particular arts; and fifthly, a sensitively appreciative Christian community that has an awareness of the state of our culture that is shaped by the radical terms of the Bible, and not by the shallow moralistic terms of conservative bourgeois society.

The above two studies have hardly attempted to deal with all these facets of the problem. They have simply aimed at giving some appreciation of the *calling* of Christian Art. In so doing, they have attempted to set general goals that we should be striving for if

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<sup>3</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*.

we would be true to our Lord and Master in this sphere of our cultural task. If it is to be anything more than theory, we must set to work at practically implementing these goals, learning from each other as we seek to do so.

We need to become much more aware of and attuned to the depth of the problems of our age. Those are nowhere more clearly exposed than in the art forms which our age has produced. However, we should remember that we are brought up in an educational system that is preoccupied with techniques, with the result that it is all too easy to be spiritually blind to the meaning of the art forms that dot our contemporary culture. To rectify this we need many more contributions of the type given by H.R. Rookmaaker.<sup>4</sup>

We need to become proficient in the techniques of the particular art forms with which we are engaged. Without this proficiency it is impossible to develop styles which embody symbolical objectifications that bear faithful witness to Christ's fallen, yet gloriously redeemed, world. However, it is a task requiring specialist training and tuition, involving hours and years of practice and experimenting.

We should work at this task within the community of the Body of Christ, seeking for a revitalization of its life and witness. A more obedient lifestyle on the part of God's people can arise only as we reflect communally upon the fullness of our task in the light of the Scriptures. This applies as much to our artistic life as to any other [p. 40](#) aspect of our life. The hallmark of this communal activity should be a gentle mutual criticism of our efforts. The desire to build personal reputations and the like should have no place within the community of saints; nor should petty, back-biting criticism.

May the grace of God aid us in this and in all our tasks of service unto Christ our Saviour and King.

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# **The Panama Congress of 1916 and its Impact on Protestantism in Latin America**

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## **THE REASON FOR THE PANAMA CONGRESS**

THE rejection by the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh in 1910 of Latin America as a legitimate field for Protestant missions<sup>1</sup> led several delegates who strongly disagreed

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<sup>4</sup> H.R. Rookmaaker, C. Seerveld, W.A. Dryness.

<sup>1</sup> Rouse & Neill, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement* (New York: Westminster, 1954), p. 357.

with this decision to meet privately. Before the conference ended they had appointed a small committee to prepare an *apologia* for Protestant work in Latin America and to pave the way for a new conference which would do for Latin America what the Edinburgh Conference was doing, and would still do, for the rest of the world.<sup>2</sup> The conference of Foreign Missions in North America sympathised with this *apologia* and called a consultation on evangelical work in Latin America in New York in March 1913. Representatives from 30 different organisations attended and they nominated a 'Committee on Co-operation in Latin America' (CCLA) with the well-known missionary statesman, Dr. Robert Speer, as its chairman.<sup>3</sup>

One of the first tasks of this committee was to convene a meeting of representatives of organisations working in Mexico to consider the problems arising from the revolution in that country. This meeting was held in Cincinnati, Ohio, on June 30 and July 1, 1914, p. 42 and produced the recommendation that competition and overlapping be eliminated by assigning each organisation to a separate region. Later, similar arrangements were promoted in other countries.<sup>4</sup> The Committee on Co-operation grew until it included representatives of 30 North American mission boards and societies. A sister committee was formed in Europe and these two committees now addressed themselves to the task of organising a congress on evangelical work in Latin America.<sup>5</sup>

The need for such a congress was very evident. The exclusion of Latin America by the Edinburgh Conference meant that Protestant work in this part of the world was being strongly influenced by missions with no relation to the nascent ecumenical movement. These missions were mostly based on independent churches in the sending countries and the missionaries they were sending out needed to have their vision broadened and their understanding of Latin American history and culture deepened. At the same time, the exclusion of Latin America by the Edinburgh Conference meant that the main-line Protestant churches, especially in Europe, were kept in ignorance of this vast field and there was an urgent need to bring the needs of this neglected continent<sup>6</sup> to their attention.

## THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONGRESS

Because of the war, the European committee asked for a postponement, but the North American committee felt that there would be no early end to conflict and that the Congress could not be put off indefinitely. Accordingly the date was fixed for February 10 to 20, 1916. Buenos Aires was considered to be too far for the delegates from the Caribbean, and Rio de Janeiro presented the problem of an additional language; and so Panama, which had become the crossroads of the world since the opening of the canal in 1914, was chosen as the meeting-place. The Congress would have been held in the capital had not the bishop issued a strong protest, proclaiming that those who attended would be guilty

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*Panama Congress, 1916* (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1971), Vol. I, p. 6.  
William A. Brown, *Toward a United Church* (New York, Scribners, 1946), p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Panama Congress, 1916*, p. 7f.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8f.

<sup>4</sup> *Panama Congress, 1916*, p. 10. Webster Browning, *New Days in Latin America* (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1925), pp. 189–92.

<sup>5</sup> Brown *op. cit.*, p. 188f.

<sup>6</sup> For several years this was the title of the magazine produced by the Evangelical Union of South America.



of mortal sin **P.43** and forbidding the use of any building in the capital for such a purpose.<sup>7</sup> As a result, the meetings were held in the dining room and the ballroom of the recently constructed Tivoli Hotel in the Canal Zone. The majority of the delegates were also lodged in the hotel.<sup>8</sup>

The Committee on Cooperation elected Eduardo Monteverde, professor at the University of Uruguay and active member of the Y.M.C.A. in Montevideo, as Chairman of the Congress, with John R. Mott and Robert E. Speer as Co-chairmen, and Samuel G. Inman as Executive Secretary. The program was very thoroughly prepared. Eight commissions, basing themselves on the studies prepared for the Edinburgh Conference and using the input of correspondents from all parts of Latin America, prepared eight massive papers on the following subjects: Survey and Occupation, Message and Method, Education, Literature, Women's work, The Church in the Field, The Home Base, Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity.

These papers have been included in the official report entitled 'Panama Congress 1916', published in the three volumes by the Missionary Education Movement in New York, and to this day represent an indispensable historical source on the Protestant movement in Latin America. The very thoroughness of these papers did, however, have the disadvantage of giving the delegates the impression that everything worthwhile had already been said. As a result, during the discussions of them, the speakers tended to limit themselves to complimentary remarks, and overlooked an important defect in their preparation, namely, that they were based on studies done for the Edinburgh Conference. Latin America had been excluded by that conference precisely because from a missionary point of view its position was in several ways unique, and too often both in the papers and in the congress speeches examples from mission work in the rest of the world were quoted as if they could be applied to Latin America without critical reassessment. It is interesting that with very few exceptions even the **p.44** native-born Latins in the Congress did not seem to be aware of this problem.

## THE NATURE OF THE CONGRESS

The word 'conference' in Spanish carries the connotation of a lecture and so the word 'congress' was chosen in order to stress that this was meant to be a meeting of minds. Altogether 481 persons attended, 230 as official delegates, 74 as visitors officially invited by the Congress, and 177 as day visitors from Panama. Of the official delegates, 159 came from five non-Latin American countries (the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Spain and Italy) and 145 from 18 Latin American countries, but of these 145 only 21 were native Latin Americans.<sup>9</sup> English was the official language although a few reports were delivered in Spanish or Portuguese. The Congress was, therefore, dominated by missionaries and executives of mission boards. There was a meeting of minds between missions, but in no sense could this be called an ecclesiastical meeting, as Edinburgh undoubtedly was, and only in a minor sense could it be called a transcultural event.

In the succeeding congresses in Latin America this would change increasingly. In Montevideo in 1925, 40 of the 165 delegates were Latin Americans and they played a

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<sup>7</sup> Braga-Monteverde, *Panamericanismo, Aspecto Religioso* (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1917), p. 85.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid. Panama Congress, 1916, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 26. Harlan Beach, *Renaissant Latin America* (New York: Missionary Education Movement 1916), p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> Braga-Monteverde, *op. cit.*, p. 87f. Beach, *op. cit.*, p. 14f.

considerable part in the proceedings. At Havana in 1929, over half the 169 delegates were Latin Americans and the program was in their hands. The missionary character of these congresses changed more slowly, however, and an ecclesiastical meeting of the significance of Edinburgh still lies in the future as far as Latin America is concerned.

## THE VARIOUS REACTIONS TO THE CONGRESS

The great majority of Protestants in Latin America warmly welcomed the idea of the Congress taking place. According to the available statistics in 1916, there were 285,703 Protestants in full communion in Latin America and 201,896 adherents, but it must be remembered that over half of these totals consisted of British and Dutch subjects living in the Guianas and the Antilles and that **P. 45** over a quarter consisted of German Lutherans in Brazil, the Argentine and Chile. The real Latin American Protestants were a tiny, despised minority who hoped that a congress on this scale might bring them some kind of recognition and perhaps some relief from the persecution to which many of them were still subjected.

Nevertheless, there was also some opposition to the Congress among Protestants. Some ultra-evangelicals felt that it would mark a first step towards an agreement with Rome and opposed it on that score. At the other extreme, there were those who feared that the Congress would act as an irritant to the Roman Catholics and would hinder a better understanding with them.<sup>10</sup> As it turned out, the ultra-evangelicals were proved right, because in spite of clear opposition where matters of principle were concerned, the conciliatory and courteous attitude adopted by the Congress towards the Roman Catholic Church set an example which years later was followed by Evangelicals in Latin America.

The organisers of the Congress had framed the invitation as follows:

‘All communions or organisations which accept Jesus Christ as Divine Saviour and Lord, and the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God, and whose purpose is to make the will of Christ prevail in Latin America, are cordially invited to participate in the Panama Congress and will be heartily welcomed.’<sup>11</sup>

One of these invitations was sent to the bishop of Panama, but this was rejected as pointed out above. However, other elements in the Roman Catholic Church adopted a different attitude. A delegate from Chile told the Congress that on arrival in that country a Roman Catholic bishop had welcomed him with these words:

“We cannot complete the task by ourselves. Besides, we have lost our hold on the people. If you can provide some inspiration **p. 46** for our people then I, for one, would be very happy to give you a part of our work.”<sup>12</sup>

The reaction of secular society in Panama was decidedly favourable. *Estrella*, the leading newspaper declared:

‘... the religious conference at present in session can only do good. The leaders make a strong and distinguished impression and perhaps they will be able to convince us that

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<sup>10</sup> *Panama Congress*, 1916, tomo I, p. 25. Beach, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> *Panama Congress*, 1916, tomo I, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> Beach, *op. cit.*, p. 181.



there are still Christians alive, in spite of the pessimism which today's conditions generate in us.'

On the first evening Dr. Ernesto LeFevre, the minister of Foreign Affairs, addressed words of welcome to the Congress<sup>13</sup> and on the Sunday evening Dr. Mott gave a moving address entitled "Religious aspects of the European war" at the National Institute of Panama.<sup>14</sup>

## THE PROGRAM OF THE CONGRESS

The mornings started with inspirational messages and the evenings were reserved for instructional talks. On the first evening after the opening night, three speakers dealt with intellectual problems of the faith, especially the relationship between science and religion. One important aim of the Congress was to encourage the missionaries to give more time and effort to evangelising the educated elite in Latin America and the widespread belief that science had discredited the reliability of the Biblical tradition was thought to be a major obstacle to this goal. On the second and third evenings talks were devoted to the Bible, its distribution, and the revolution it had brought about in some Latin American communities. The Bible undoubtedly played a key role in Protestant evangelisation in Latin America, but it is noteworthy that the Congress hardly mentioned Biblical Criticism. It is true that as yet this played no role among the Protestant churches in Latin America, but it was beginning to affect relationships among the missions and as noted above this Congress was about missions, not churches. **P. 47**

The fourth evening was devoted to the problem of raising Latin American leadership, as vital an issue then as it is now. The fifth evening was devoted to women's work. Because of the *machismo* (male dominance) of the Latin American world, this has always been a very important matter. The sixth evening was given to a consideration of the need of social work in Latin America. In this aspect the Congress was well ahead of its time. On the seventh evening the triumph of the Gospel over individual and collective egoisms was proclaimed, and finally on the evening of February 18, there was a discourse on the dynamic power of the Gospel and ways in which this power could be maintained. Many excellent things were said in this regard, but comparatively little attention was given to the Holy Spirit and his operation. In fact, the Congress did not mention Pentecostalism and in this respect was decidedly not prophetic about what was already happening and would continue to happen on an ever wider scale in Latin America.

In addition, special meetings were held almost every night in the neighboring churches in Panama in which Congress members p. took part. This gave them the opportunity of getting the feel of Protestant churches in Latin America, and at the same time gave these churches the privilege of listening to some of the most distinguished missionary speakers from the North Atlantic community. An afternoon was devoted to an outing to see the Panama canal and right at the end of the Congress a business session was held which gave permanent status to the Committee on Co-operation in Latin America. This committee would have no legislative, but only consultative, functions. The main program of the Congress was, however, filled with the eight great papers to which attention must now be given.

## THE CONGRESS PAPERS

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<sup>13</sup> *Panama Congress*, 1916, tome I, pp. 27, 29.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210f.

The first paper entitled 'Survey and Occupation', started with a description of the colonial background in Latin America and then went on to trace the development of political liberalism in the post-colonial period and the spread of modern education among the upper and middle classes. The effect of liberalism and modern education has been to undermine traditional religious beliefs. Accordingly, the writers of this paper urged that the training of missionaries [P. 48](#) going to Latin America be improved so that they could reach these higher classes with the Gospel. Basic to this approach was the presupposition that if the Gospel could only be presented to these people in a well-reasoned and attractive way, they would readily accept it.

This paper then went on to stress the need for more social work in Latin America. Apart from the issues of agrarian reform and Marxism, this paper touched on every issue being debated today in connection with the improvement of the lot of the masses. For the Protestant message to be credible, it was necessary not only that it be expressed in terms that were relevant to the practical needs of the people, but that the missions and churches proclaiming it show far more unity among themselves. The writers of this paper realised that mission unity on the field was dependent on more unity on the home front, but they did make a series of practical suggestions for co-operation in the fields of literature, medical work and education. Further, more priority was urged for the training of a native ministry and the indigenisation of the young churches. To lower the costs it was suggested that union seminaries be established in the main centers to which all the missions and churches send their better students. The indigenisation of the young churches required missionaries to relinquish their control over them and to teach them to rely on their own resources of manpower and money. Finally the paper urged missionaries to avoid proclaiming the superiority of the politics and practices of their home countries and warned: 'nothing is more prevalent among Latin Americans than doubt concerning the unselfishness of the United States in her foreign policies.'

The second paper dealt with the message and the method. The message was summarised as follows:

- a. The Bible as the authoritative source of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and his apostles.
- b. The gracious Fatherhood of God—all have access to him.
- c. The person and work of Jesus Christ. No-one can surpass him in making God known. No one has more power with God than him and he is the Head of the Church.
- d. The need to emphasise the essential oneness of the evangelical churches. [p. 49](#)

The first point was directed at the Catholic emphasis on ecclesiastical tradition; the second at the idea that access to God is via the priesthood and the sacraments; the third at an exaggeration of the role of the Virgin Mary; and the fourth at the largely justified Catholic taunt of disunity among the Protestants. Given the situation, it was understandable that the Congress should formulate the message needed as an alternative to the form of Christianity which had had exclusive rights in Latin America for four centuries. Nevertheless it is unfortunate that the message was not also formulated in such a way as to make clear its relevance to the practical problems of this part of the world. A gap was thus established between the message the Congress advocated and its call for social action, and, in the years following, some Protestant churches in Latin America devoted themselves more and more to social action,<sup>15</sup> while others restricted themselves to immediate, practical needs.

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<sup>15</sup> J.B.A. Kessler, *A Study of the Older Protestant Missions and Churches in Peru and Chile* (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1967), pp. 93, 133.

As far as the method of propagating the Gospel was concerned, this second paper advocated reverent services, attractive buildings and a social application of the message. Again, the idea was to win the intelligentsia. The missions of the mainline denominations which by and large adopted the recommendations of this Congress soon acquired a middle class image in Latin America. They developed a social concern, it is true, but it was a concern directed at the poor instead of being a concern which took the poor as their starting-point, as had been the case when these missions started their work in Latin America.<sup>16</sup>

The discussion of this paper produced some interesting contrasts. Some of the Latin delegates felt that the best manner of helping the Catholic church was to oppose it, and even at times to attack it. Other Latins at the Congress felt that the Catholics should be won and not antagonised. There was also a divergence among the Anglo-Saxon delegates, but in their case about social work. Some fully supported the social emphasis of the first and second papers, but others warned of the danger of turning missions into a civilising rather than a regenerative force. Finally John R. Mott, the ecumenical p. 50 pioneer, gave a magnificent address in which he appealed for united evangelistic campaigns which would mobilise the membership of all the churches for witness to their respective nations. Forty years later his vision found its realisation in the Evangelism in Depth campaigns held in various Latin American republics.

The third paper dealt with education. It was noted that mission schools which had tried to proselytise had failed, while schools which had given priority to raising the standard of education had generally speaking been successful. According to a Brazilian pastor, the failure of the proselytising schools was due to their imitation of the education methods used by Christian schools in the Far East because they hid their proselytising aims and yet insisted that their pupils attend religious services in school, and, perhaps more than anything else, because the small minority of evangelical children in them meant that the general atmosphere was at variance with their aim. Unfortunately the report did not really discuss the need of education among the poor. In part this was due to the preoccupation with teaching the better classes and in part because they assumed that an improvement in the general level of education would automatically benefit the poor. Neither they, nor anyone else at that time, realised sufficiently the extent to which oppressive structures could continue to hold down the poor, even if some of these poor did, by means of scholarships, receive better education. It is a pity that the report gave no attention to the Adventist work, already in progress round Lake Titicaca in which many of these problems were being creatively approached.<sup>17</sup> Finally the paper emphasised the need for evening schools, and for technical and agricultural education.

The fourth paper dealt with literature. It admitted openly that much of the Protestant literature was ineffective because it had been translated directly from the English. For instance, Biblical allusions might be understood in an Anglo-Saxon setting but they were often meaningless in Latin America. Accordingly the report strongly urged that more attention be given to raising up Latin American authors. The report also urged the production of serious literature to reach the more educated. Finally, as might be expected, the report strongly urged the need for greater p. 51 collaboration in the field of literature; in fact it went so far as to propose the establishment of a single editorial board for the whole of Latin America. John Ritchie, a missionary of the Evangelical Union of South

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<sup>16</sup> Remark made by Dr. Orlando E. Costas at the CEHJLA symposium in Panama in December 1976.

<sup>17</sup> Kessler, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–37.

America working in Peru, effectively protested that many operators of Evangelical bookstores in South America would not be willing to submit to that degree of control.

The fifth paper dealt with women's work. Again the need of reaching the more cultured ladies was emphasised. To this end it was urged that both the educational program and the buildings of the Protestant schools be improved. The need for hostels for young ladies near the teacher training colleges was also brought forward.

The sixth paper was entitled 'The Church in the Field'. A more even geographical distribution of missionaries was recommended, and in particular, if a certain mission or church had started work in a region, it was strongly urged that new missions enter unoccupied areas first before going to the same region. The report noted that various churches had been founded as a result of the reading of the Scriptures alone and that such churches usually developed better than those where a missionary was working. It was also noted that not sufficient responsibility had been given to upcoming Latin leaders, and so a general recommendation was made that missionaries abstain from accepting posts of leadership in the national churches except where this was inevitable. According to the compilers of this report, the key to the development of the work lay in achieving self-support for the congregations. Some Latin American pastors were known to be opposed to promoting self-support for fear that their members would come to consider them as their paid servants. The report therefore recommended the installation of voluntary as well as paid workers in the congregations. It is a pity that this report did not consider the apprenticeship training of church workers and leaders as it was then being developed by the Pentecostals in Chile and Brazil, but it is probable that at that time no one outside these movements was aware of what was happening.

The report on the 'Church in the Field' also gave consideration to the attitude which missionaries and national workers should adopt towards social injustices and political problems in Latin p. 52 America. It was agreed that it was impossible for missionaries or national workers to keep quiet if religious liberty was being endangered or when indigenous tribes were being threatened with extinction, but in all other cases the missionaries in particular were urged to act with extreme caution. The reason was not any desire to condone these other injustices, but the realisation that the intervention of foreigners in matters which were considered to be internal would probably have the opposite effect of that which was desired.

The seventh report dealt with the 'home base', or what today would be called the sending countries. The compilers lamented the ignorance about Latin America in most North American circles and urged that more be done to educate the home base. The compilers also complained that relatively few North American missionaries were going to Latin America, but, according to the Congress report, between 1907 and 1914 from 12% to 16% of all the North American missionary candidates went to Latin America, hardly justifying such complaints. It must be remembered that at that time vast areas which are today closed for missionaries were still open.

The eighth report dealt with co-operation and the promotion of unity. Up to a point this paper repeated and reinforced what had been said in the earlier papers, but some interesting new thoughts were added. First, that among Protestants the barrier to cooperation lay not between churches, but between the missions of the established churches and the non-denominational missions, or, as we would call them today, the 'faith missions'. Secondly, that even then the barrier between Protestants and Catholics did not lie on a personal level at which there existed many good friendships, but on an institutional one.

## THE GENERAL INFLUENCE OF THE CONGRESS ON MISSIONARY WORK IN LATIN AMERICA

In one sense the influence of the Congress was very important. Not only did the printed report provide many missionaries with the first comprehensive picture of Protestant work in Latin America, but the Congress itself stimulated the convening of a series of congresses on a continental scale which have done much to give the **P. 53** Protestant movement and its national leaders the self-confidence they possess today. The immediate practical aims of the Congress did not, however, fare so well. The mission boards of the established churches which were working in Latin America did their best to put the Congress recommendations into effect and their failure was due to factors of which those who gathered in Panama were largely unaware. It is therefore necessary to consider the attempts to implement the four main aims of the Congress in some detail.

### THE EFFORT TO EVANGELISE THE EDUCATED CLASSES

Many of the delegates to Panama believed if only the Gospel presentation in Latin America could be improved, that many of the educated Latins would accept. They based their optimism on the great interest being shown at that time in the Gospel by middle and upper class people who kept on saying that if only the Protestants could improve and beautify their places of worship and raise the standard of their ministry they would be delighted to attend. No doubt the Protestant churches were dingy and many of the preachers uneducated, but the fact remains that in the years before the Panama Congress when the prestige of the Protestant movement was at its lowest, the willingness of middle and upper class Latins to attend the services was higher than for many years afterwards.

In 1905 John Jarrett, a missionary working in Cuzco, moved to Arequipa in southern Peru to take advantage of the considerable liberal agitation taking place at that time against the ecclesiastical domination in that city. With great difficulty he managed to hire a very inferior room, but for a time many distinguished people visited the services.<sup>18</sup> Eleven years of experience in Peru had, however, given Jarrett considerable insight into the true situation and he reported to his board in London that these distinguished people did not come to be converted, but to add force to their protest against the political domination of the Catholic church.<sup>19</sup> The greater the success of the Protestant services, the bigger was their leverage on the Catholic hierarchy. **p. 54**

The Panama Congress noted correctly in its reports that, as education advanced in Latin America, so did people abandon the Catholic faith. The assumption made was that if the Gospel was presented to them in such a way as not to violate their scientific and other knowledge, then they would return to the faith. This overlooked the fact, however, that people who received some education reacted against the Catholic faith not usually in the first place because of any intellectual difficulty, but because of their desire to rid themselves of ecclesiastical domination. Such people were not, with some glorious exceptions, willing to submit to a new and far more stringent Lordship of Christ in their lives. In other words, the vision people had in Panama of being able to reach the upper classes was largely an illusion. Not only did this vision absorb energies (mostly in the form of the establishment of elitist schools) that might well have been better spent on the poor,

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<sup>18</sup> Kessler, *La Historia de la Iglesia Evangelica en Arequipa*, unpublished document, 1974.

<sup>19</sup> McDonald Hennell's information to the writer, based on Hennell's study of confidential minutes in London.



but Protestant unity was sacrificed for it as well. One of the reasons that missions from the established churches hesitated to co-operate with the non-denominational missions was the fear that the somewhat brash way in which the latter presented the authority of the Gospel and of the Bible, would frighten away the educated people the former were trying to reach.

## **THE DESIRE TO UNIFY THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

During his visit to Peru in 1917, Mr Guy Inman, the secretary of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, was disturbed to note how few national leaders had been trained up to that time. He recommended that the evening study classes that Ritchie had started several years earlier be extended and made a co-operative effort. Indeed, during the years 1917 and 1918 combined classes did take place in which John Mackay of the Free Church of Scotland, Methodist missionaries and John Ritchie all helped, but after this the effort stopped.<sup>20</sup> No doubt Ritchie's illness had something to do with it, but the basic reason for the stoppage was the growing tension between the Methodists on the one hand and Ritchie on the other. In 1921 the Methodists started their own training institute but were forced to discontinue it some years later. P. 55 Ritchie's efforts to restart a training program of his own failed, and only in 1930 were the Evangelical Union of South America, the Free Church of Scotland and the Christian and Missionary Alliance able to start what is now the Lima Evangelical Seminary.

In some other countries the effort to start a united seminary had more success. A Union seminary started in 1914 by the Methodists and the Presbyterians in Santiago, Chile, lasted till 1930 and in Buenos Aires a Union Theological Seminary whose roots go back to 1884 continues to function today, as does the Evangelical Seminary in Puerto Rico started in 1919. Nowhere, however, was a lasting theological institute possible in which both missions from established churches and the so-called non-denominational missions participated. Generally speaking, the missions from the established churches had the professors and the non-denominational missionaries had the students, but the theological and ideological differences between these two groups proved to be too big an obstacle. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the Congress glossed over these differences in its desire to emphasise 'the essential oneness of the evangelical churches'.

## **THE ATTEMPT TO GIVE A SOCIAL DIMENSION TO MISSION WORK IN LATIN AMERICA**

In the years following the Congress, the Methodists tried most consistently to apply the Gospel to the social needs of the Latin American republics. By this time, however, they had become a lower middle class church with the result that their social efforts were directed at the poor instead of trying to involve the poor. In addition, during the 20s and the 30s, Methodist missions were decidedly influenced by theological modernism and slackened their evangelistic efforts.<sup>21</sup> As a result of both these factors they remained a relatively small church in Latin America, and the hard fact is that church growth is needed to be able to exercise social influence.

Other missions looking at the Methodists came to identify social involvement with theological modernism and this made several of them eliminate social outreach from their

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<sup>20</sup> Kessler, *A Study of the Oldest Protestant Missions ...*, p. 174.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

stated aims. In 1928 the board of the Evangelical Union of South America in London defined its aims as follows: p. 56

Our sole objective as a society was that of the winning of men and women to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and the gathering of these into Christian churches on a New Testament basis with no qualifications or limitations of a denominational character.<sup>22</sup>

This statement was somewhat absurd because at the time it was made, the mission in question had hospitals, midwifery programs, schools, orphanages and at least one large experimental farm in Latin America. Furthermore, this mission has continued to provide most of these services up to the present in spite of the fact that it has been amply demonstrated that these activities are rather ineffective means of winning people to Christ, at least when practiced in the way that most missions practiced them. Unlike the Methodists, the 'faith missions' were in touch with the poor but, because they had eliminated social outreach from their objectives, they only involved these poor in evangelism, leaving the missionaries to attend to the schools, hospitals, orphanages and farms. The reason that the 'faith missions' continued to work in social outreach was because the missionaries instinctively realised that it was impossible for a Christian to live in a Latin American situation and do otherwise, but they never realised that this applied equally to the poor converts they were winning. The result was that the social work done by the 'faith missions' was also directed at the poor and did not involve them. The great exception to this was the work done by the Adventists around Lake Titicaca where from the start they made the Indians who came to their central school pass on the lessons given in subsidiary schools throughout the region. They also made the Indians take part in the medical program, with the result that the Adventists made an important social impact and achieved rapid church growth as well.<sup>23</sup>

## THE EFFORT TO PROMOTE PROTESTANT UNITY

This was the main aim of the Congress and in the ensuing years efforts were made to establish local committees on co-operation in as many republics as possible. As far as comity arrangements were concerned real progress was made. For instance, in Peru P. 57 a committee was established in 1917 with Ritchie as its chairman, which assigned the north of the country to the Free Church of Scotland Mission, the center to the Methodists and the south to the Evangelical Union of South America. Unfortunately this arrangement started coming apart almost as soon as it was made. Ritchie, who was working with the Evangelical Union of South America, had been instrumental in establishing a series of congregations in central Peru by means of tracts sent through the post. When he signed the above-mentioned agreement he should have advised these congregations to join with the Methodists, but instead he stoutly defended the right of these new congregations to choose between the Methodists and the new denomination which was being formed under his ministry. The result was that two denominations were established often in the same town in central Peru and years of rivalry ensued.

If Ritchie felt that he could not advise nascent congregations which denomination they should join he should not have signed the comity agreement, much less have been

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<sup>22</sup> McDonald Hennell's information to the writer based on Hennell's study of the November 1928 Evangelical Union of South America's Board minutes.

<sup>23</sup> Kessler, *A Study of the Older Protestant Missions* ..., pp. 238-40.



chairman of the committee on co-operation. The immediate problem lay in Ritchie's belief that the comity arrangements applied to the missionaries but not to the national Christians. At a deeper level lay the problem why two tiny denominations, one still in the process of formation and both still suffering persecution, should find it necessary to compete with each other when vast tracts of country were still unevangelised. The reason was the same as that which made united theological education impossible, namely, the incompatibility between church-based and faith missions. The Congress report clearly mentioned this problem, but evidently it was felt that it could be overcome. The fact is that although in other countries developments may not have been as dramatic as in Peru, nowhere was this barrier really overcome in Latin America. In view of the fact that the compilers of the Panama reports were basing themselves on the experience of the Edinburgh Conference, it is justified then to ask why they were so naive on this point.

The answer lies in the difference between Latin America and the non-Christian mission fields with which Edinburgh was dealing. In non-Christian countries, Christian groups with differing interpretations of the Bible still found it possible to co-operate because the differences among themselves were small compared with the differences with the religions surrounding them. In Latin p. 58 America, however, the various Protestant groups found themselves confronted with a Catholicism which in theory accepted the Bible as the rule of faith just as they did. The major differences between Protestant groups were thus of the same order of magnitude as the differences between the Protestants and the Catholics. In other words, the situation in Latin America at the time of the Panama Congress resembled much more that of Europe at the time of the Reformation than that of the non-Christian countries being studied at the Edinburgh Conference. The incompatibility between the Lutherans and the Calvinists on the one hand and the Anabaptists on the other should, therefore, have been a warning to the compilers of the Panama reports that the lack of co-operation between church-based and faith missions was a major problem indeed, and that it was useless to emphasise 'the essential oneness of evangelical churches'.

A by-product of the Edinburgh Conference was the formation of the 'Faith and Order' movement to study and analyse the differences between Christian churches with a view first to understanding these differences and then to overcoming them. It is a pity that the Panama Congress did not recommend the same thing for the Protestant church in Latin America.

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## **Ethics and the Old Testament: a Functional Understanding of Law**

*by* CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT

*Reprinted from THIRD WAY (19 MAY, 1977) with permission.*

*In this three-part article Chris Wright examines the ethical use and abuse of the Old Testament by evangelicals.*

*In the first part (5 May, 1977), he lays bare as 'Cut-price hermeneutics' inconsistencies of the 'random relevance selection' of O.T. texts to prove or support a favourite viewpoint. He then discusses the dangers of overstressing the view that the 'creation ordinances' are of universal relevance while the Mosaic material has only temporal relevance. He suggests creation theology can be understood only in the light of Israel's redemptive faith.*

*The validity of the common evangelical practice of dividing the Law into moral, civil and ceremonial categories is questioned. This view that the moral law based on the character and will of God is universal and permanent, that the civil law as the temporal legislation of Israel is no longer relevant, and that the ceremonial law of cultic rites and sacrifices as fulfilled and abrogated by Christ is also obsolete, is an oversimplification and an arbitrary division of the laws of the Pentateuch. This thesis is expounded in greater detail in Part II, reproduced below.*

*In Part III (2 June, 1977), the example of the Jubilee institution is discussed in detail against the background of Israel's socio-economic, theological, literary and historical context.*

Editor.

Unlike the 'moral, civil, ceremonial' division, the following classification is not designed to answer *our* 'A.D.' question: 'Which laws are still relevant?' Rather, it is a functional description of the [p. 60](#) different kinds of law and their spheres of operation, from the 'B.C.' perspective of Israelite society itself.<sup>1</sup>

## **I. CRIMINAL LAW**

A crime is an offence which a state regards as contrary to the best interests of the whole community and accordingly punishes in the name of the highest authority within the state. Criminal law is therefore distinct from civil law which is concerned with private disputes between citizens, in which the state may adjudicate but is not the 'offended' party.

### **1. Israel as a Theocratic State**

Now Israel attributed their very existence as a nation-state to the historical activity of God, and therefore accorded him supreme authority within the state. They also knew that they depended for continued security as a nation upon the preservation of the covenant relationship established at Sinai between God and themselves. Therefore, any action which was a fundamental violation of that covenant relationship presented a threat to the very security of the nation and was treated with appropriate seriousness as a 'crime'. Because Israel was a theocracy, the social and theological realms fused into one in the delineation of criminal offences.

### **2. The Importance of the Decalogue**

It is in this context that we must see the central importance for Israel of the *decalogue* as an expression of certain fundamental kinds of behaviour which were required or prohibited on the authority of the Lord, by whose redemptive grace the nation was now a free people ([Exodus 20:2](#)). The decalogue itself was not a 'criminal law code' in our sense

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<sup>1</sup> This analysis is partly based upon the work of A. Phillips: *Ancient Israel's Criminal Law* (Oxford, 1970), particularly as regards the distinction between criminal and civil law in Israel. But though the analysis is his, the views expressed in this article arising from it are my own.

(it does not specify punishments), but it set out the boundaries and obligations of the relationship between Israel and God, and thus defined the nature and extent of what, for Israel, would constitute serious crime. It stated, as it were, the [p. 61](#) overall policy, of which other laws provided practical implementation.

It is significant, therefore, that all the offences for which there was a statutory death penalty in Old Testament law can be related, directly or indirectly, to the commandments. These cases are not examples of a primitive judicial system fired by a vengeful religious fanaticism. They are rather *socioeconomic* with which the covenant relationship was to be regarded, and a measure of the importance attached to protecting it from violation which could endanger the whole community. The national interest was bound up with preventing and punishing crime against the covenant.

Not that every commandment was sanctioned by the death penalty. The tenth (coveting) was not, by its very nature, open to *any* judicial penalty—a fact of profound ethical importance, since it showed that a person could be morally ‘criminal’ before God without having committed an overt, judicially actionable, offence (a principle applied to other commandments by Christ). The eighth (stealing) dealt with property offences, none of which was capital in Israelite law, but they were still treated as more than merely civil matters ([Leviticus 6:1–8](#)).

## II. CIVIL LAW

Many of the laws in the Pentateuch begin with ‘If’ or ‘When’, and then describe a *case*. There are cases of damage, assault, negligence (see examples in [Exodus 21](#) and [22](#)). Then follow instructions concerning remedial compensation, or some form of punishment. This civil law of Israel has much in common with other more ancient codes of law, particularly the Mesopotamian Code of Hammurabi. Occasionally, however, there are significant differences which seem to reveal the influence of Israel’s theological convictions.

### 1. Slaves

The most striking of these concerns *slaves*. Three O.T. civil laws are quite unparalleled in any other ancient Near Eastern code: [Exodus 21:20](#) and [21:26](#), which make a man’s treatment of his *own* slaves (as opposed to injury to someone else’s slave as in other [p. 62](#) codes) a matter of public judicial concern; and [Deuteronomy 23:15–16](#), which requires that asylum be granted to a runaway slave. This last is contrary to all the other codes in which harbouring runaways was an offence liable to quite heavy penalties.

There can be no doubt that this ‘swimming against the stream’ in Israel’s civil law on slavery is the result of her own historical and religious experience. ‘Is it not extraordinary—not to say amusing—that the one society in the ancient Near East that had a law protecting runaway slaves was that society that traced its origin to a group of runaway slaves from Egypt?... The point is that Israel has experienced God as the one who is sympathetic to runaway slaves. So this law is not just an ethical or legal principle in defence of human rights, but a reflect of Israel’s own religious experience—a fundamental characteristic of Biblical ethics,’ says David Clines.

This illustrates the point that Israel’s ethical attitude to slavery arose from her historic-redemptive traditions and was not founded primarily upon a creation principle of the rights of man. Admittedly, the latter emphasis is found in [Job 31:15](#), which asserts the created equality of master and slave, but in a context (v. [13](#)) which refers to a civil law dispute. We have here uncovered a powerful ethical principle by a study of Israel’s *civil* law. You will not find a section of ‘moral law’ denouncing slavery. But in studying and

comparing the civil law we come upon interesting and significant theological and moral factors at work.

## 2. Human Life and Property

One feature that emerges from both the criminal and civil law is that human life and material property are treated as qualitatively separate and are not to be equated with one another in human judicial procedure. Like parallel lines, they have no common intersection.

Thus, no offence involving property (including theft) was punishable by death (in contrast to many ancient law codes, and our own until comparatively recent times), whereas theft of a person for gain (kidnapping) was a capital offence ([Exodus 21:16](#)). On the other hand, if some one committed a capital offence, he could not get off by paying money ([Numbers 35:29-31](#)); neither the victim's life nor his own was to be valued in property terms. The only exception [p. 63](#) to this was the case of the fatally goring ox, where a ransom could be accepted because the homicide was indirect ([Exodus 21:28-30](#)).

The sanctity of human life—the upper line—is a well-known O.T. principle that needs little emphasis here. Children, as well as slaves, were legally regarded as the property of their father, but the practical effects of this property status were carefully restricted and their rights as human beings protected in ways that could also be contrasted in some respects with the legal codes of surrounding states.

Turning to the lower line—property—the question arises as to whether it has a sanctity of its own as well. Is the phrase 'sanctity of property' a valid expression of O.T. thinking?

It is, of course, the creation belief in the O.T. that provides the widest basis for an ethical view of property and material things in general. There are two complementary principles. First, since God, as Creator, is Lord and owner of all created things, *human* property rights are derived, and not autonomous. Secondly, since man, as part of the consequences of being made in the image of God, has been given dominion over the rest of creation, his ownership and use of material things is morally and theologically legitimate. But insofar as it can be called 'ownership', it can only apply to the common ownership by mankind of all the material resources of the world. It does not seem exegetically possible (though it is done) to rest arguments for the legitimacy of *private* property on the 'Creation ordinance' to 'subdue the earth ... and have dominion' alone. But it did have a very solid basis elsewhere.

The Israelites believed that the land was ultimately owned by Yahweh who had given it to his people and required that it be divided up according to families. The family head owned the land of his patrimony, not simply by the technical legality of his inheritance, but ultimately because he held it from Yahweh; therein lay his inalienable right—theologically sanctioned and legally protected.

So 'property rights' in the O.T. are not concerned with an abstract, impersonal principle, not with the sanctity of property *per se*. To speak of the rights or sanctity of property is in fact misleading; they belong only to the person and his family as members of God's people. Rightful possession of landed property was the symbol and guarantee of the covenant relationship, and it was surrounded on all sides by responsibilities—to God himself, to the whole family line, [p. 64](#) and to neighbours in general. In other words, the responsibility for material wealth in the O.T. is more than a general stewardship of creation; it includes a host of specific duties arising from the historical and socio-economic circumstances of God's people living on God's land.

## 3. Present-Day Application

Now in applying the O.T. perspective on material wealth and personal property, we need to keep the balance that it presents. We may certainly wish to employ the vehement *prophetic* denunciation of the *abuse* of wealth, the amassing of land and capital at the expense of the economically powerless. In the present state of society this is undoubtedly the right place to turn up the volume. But it is a mistake, in my view, to pursue that emphasis to the extreme of denying the legitimacy of private property altogether—something the prophets do not do even at their most radical moments. I have never yet heard a convincing argument from the O.T. that property ownership is something intrinsically wrong. What is more, having studied in some detail the depth of the bond between Israel's theological self-understanding and her economic system of multiple family land-tenure, I do not expect to hear one.

Yet one senses a certain embarrassment in Christian circles today on the subject of 'property rights' (even allowing for the ambiguous misnomer)—an embarrassment often mixed with feelings of guilt at our own material prosperity which feeds upon the economic oppression we verbally condemn. But our condemnation of sinful abuse ought not to spill over into a rejection of legitimate and responsible use. Otherwise we may end up in company with some early Christians whose horror at the sinfulness of sexual excess led them to regard marriage itself as evil.

### III. FAMILY LAW

In ancient Israel, the judicial role of the household was one important aspect of the central place in society that was filled by the family and larger kinship groupings. The head of a household had the primary responsibility for and legal authority over all his dependents—which could include married sons and their families, **P. 65** of which the protection of Gideon by his father's house in [Judges 25–31](#) is a good example. So on some matters he could act on his own legal authority without recourse to civil law or the external authority of a court. Such matters included serious parental discipline (exclusive of the right of life or death, which lay only with a court of elders, [Deuteronomy 21:18–21](#)), divorce (for which no civil 'permission' was required, [Deuteronomy 24:1–4](#)), and the making permanent of voluntary slavery ([Exodus 21:5–6](#)). There were also laws and institutions designed to protect the family and its ancestral property—such as levirate marriage ([Deuteronomy 25:5–10](#)), inheritance laws ([Deuteronomy 21:15–17](#)), redemption procedures for land and persons, and the Jubilee institution (Leviticus:25).

#### 1. Three-Dimensional Relationships

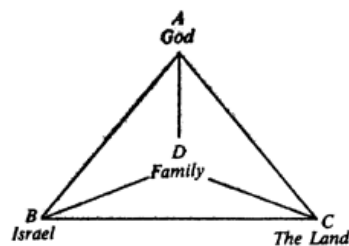
Now under the old 'moral, civil, ceremonial' scheme, all this would be subsumed under 'civil law', but it really merits a separate category since, sociologically, it is a different kind of law. The importance of it is that it underlines heavily the social, economic and theological centrality of the household-plus-land units in Israel. It thereby adds a three-dimensional richness to the familiar 'sanctity-of-the-family' motif, which is otherwise usually attached to the fifth commandment alone.

Recognition of this 'family law' and of its complex socio-economic setting in Israel performs another salutary hermeneutical function. It should prevent an oversimplistic emphasis upon the role of the family in modern society. There are those whose zeal for a Biblical model of the centrality of the family leads them to champion the family as at once the bedrock, bricks and cement of a healthy society. I have no hesitation in agreeing that Biblically and ideally they are right. But modern society is neither Biblical nor ideal and the position of a family in today's world is scarcely a shadow of what it was in ancient Israel. Is it fair then to lead upon it the same high expectations and responsibilities?



The family of Israel stood at the centre of a triangle of clearly defined relationships between God, Israel and the land.

The outer triangle represents the three major relationships of Israel's theological self-understanding; the primary relationship [p. 66](#) between God and Israel (AB); God as the ultimate owner of the land (AC); the land as given to Israel as an inheritance (CB). The family was the basic unit of Israelite social and kinship structure (BD) and also the basic unit and beneficiary of Israel's system of land-tenure (CD). Thus it was that these family-plus-land units, the lower triangle (BCD), constituted the socio-economic fabric upon which Israel's relationship with God was grounded, being channelled through the vertical relationship (AD). Social, economic and theological realms were thus bound together inextricably, all three having the family as their focal point.



## 2. Questions About the Nature of Society

Now it was within this conceptual framework and with the economic and social *support* of these relationships that the Israelite family could perform its vital role in the moral and religious life of the nation. So if we want to assert the importance of the family in society along truly Biblical lines, we must surely ask serious and critical questions about the nature of society itself. Granted, of course, that we are not a redeemed theocratic nation, as Israel was, we can still aim to produce a society which reflects in *some* senses the triangle of relationships within which the family was set in the O.T. This would mean a society in which families would enjoy a degree of economic independence based upon the rightful ownership of an equitable share in the nation's wealth; in which a family could feel some social relevance and significance in its [p. 67](#) community; in which every family had the opportunity of hearing the message of divine redemption in a culturally relevant and meaningful way, and the freedom to respond to it.

Idealistic? Perhaps; but at least it is a Biblical idealism that strikes me as more realistic than that which seeks a morally revitalised society simply by calling for greater family cohesion without tackling the economic forces that undermine it. Evangelicalism on the whole seems to be realising the inadequacy of the 'domino theory' of social action—*i.e.* the view that if only we convert enough individuals, society will be transformed without changing the structures. I wonder if the 'support-the-family' line may not be in danger of the same inadequacy (only with bigger dominoes), unless at the same time we are striving to create social conditions in which family cohesion is economically possible and socially worthwhile.

The witness of O.T. history was that economic forces, partly created and partly accelerated by greed and oppression, led to the social break-up of the lower triangle (BCD), and that this in turn was a major factor (though of course not the only one) in the moral and spiritual dissolution of the relationships BA and DA. The sheer powerlessness of ordinary families in the face of such forces is poignantly expressed in the plea of impoverished fathers to Nehemiah: 'We have borrowed money for the king's tax upon our fields and our vineyards ... We are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves ... *But it is not in our power to help it*, for other men have our fields and our vineyards' ([5:1-5](#)). This is a cry with some very modern echoes.



## IV. CULTIC LAW

Because the ‘cermonial’ category of the standard division is said to prefigure Christ and to have been fulfilled by him, many people’s concept of it is controlled by the letter to the Hebrews and limited to the blood sacrifices, priestly regulations and the Day of Atonement rituals. But though these are certainly vital parts of it, the cultic dimension of life for an Israelite embraced much more. As well as such matters as dietary and hygiene regulations, festivals and holy days, it included very practical areas with social effects—such as material gifts, tithes, and harvest first-fruits.

Even the major economic institution of the sabbatical year for p. 68 the land had a cultic rationale, based upon the concept of the divine ownership of the land. Both [Leviticus 25:4](#) and [Deuteronomy 15:2](#) speak of the requirements of the seventh year as being ‘unto the Lord’; *i.e.* the material sacrifices involved in the sabbatical institution were an obligation to God himself. But the practical point of it was clearly humanitarian concern for the impoverished, the debtor, etc. ([Exodus 23:11](#)). Thus it is here, in this unlikely-looking *cultic* corner of Israelite law that we find spelt out in concrete economic terms an ethical pattern familiar elsewhere in Biblical thought, namely the fulfilment of one’s duty to God by means of responsible, sensitive and sacrificial care for one’s fellow-men.

## V. CHARITABLE LAW

This is a category which would not usually be regarded strictly as ‘law’ at all, and indeed it could not have been intended as enforceable legislation in Israel. Yet Israel’s theological awareness is so interwoven with the practicalities of life that we find hosts of these humanitarian injunctions sprinkled throughout the Torah, side by side with the plainest case laws and the most awesome criminal statutes.

The human concern of these injunction p. is familiar: the protection of the weak, justice for the poor, impartiality, generosity, respect for even an enemy’s property, care for strangers and immigrants, prompt payment of wages, even care for animals. (For instance, see [Exodus 22:20–27](#); [23:2–11](#); [Leviticus 19:9–10](#); [13:18](#); [Deuteronomy 15:12–14](#); [24:10–18](#)).

But it is the theological motivation and sanction behind all this that is ethically most significant—namely that it is a response to what God himself has done for Israel and a reflection of his character as revealed in his historical dealings. Social charity, therefore, is not based upon the humanity of the recipient or his inherent human rights; nor is it only because this is the kind of thing God commands; nor is it even because that is what God is like, in some abstract, ethereal sense.

No; the primary, repeated, and compelling reason why the Israelite must behave in these ways towards the weak, enslaved or impoverished, is because that is how God has actually behaved towards him, when, in the historical experience of the nation, he was p. 69 in the same condition. ‘You shall remember that *you* were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there: *therefore* I command you to do this’ ([Deuteronomy 24:18](#)).

There is here a prefiguring in principle of that great commandment ‘that you love one another *as I have loved you*’ ([John 15:12](#)). It is here that we come closest to that two-dimensional *love* which is at the heart of the law—as indeed it is of Biblical ethics as a whole: ‘You shall love the LORD your God’ ([Deuteronomy 6:5](#)); ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’ ([Leviticus 19:18](#)). p. 70

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# Evangelism, Salvation and Social Justice

by RONALD J. SIDER

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*The fundamental question of our time is: What is Salvation? Attempts to understand and re-interpret the mission of the Church in the world and, in particular, the relationship of world evangelisation to social service and justice in society has become the pre-occupation of all traditions of the Christian Church in recent years. The World Council of Churches Department of World Mission and Evangelism Conference at Bangkok in January 1973 on 'Salvation Today' adopted a holistic view. In November of the same year a group of evangelicals promulgated the Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern. In July 1974, the Lausanne International Congress of World Evangelisation offered the Lausanne Covenant. During the same year the Third General Assembly of the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops discussed the issue in Rome, and Orthodox churches held a consultation on 'Confessing Christ Today' at Bucharest. The WCC, in the Fifth General Assembly in Nairobi 1975, took up the issues raised at Bangkok, especially in the sections 'Confessing Christ', 'Seeking Community—the common search of people of various faiths, cultures and ideologies', and in 'Structures of Injustice and Struggles for Liberation'. Then on the 8th December 1975, two days before the conclusion of the Nairobi Assembly, Pope Paul, in response to a request by the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops, issued Evangelii Nuntiandi, his apostolic exhortation on 'evangelisation in the modern world'. Since Lausanne, several regional congresses on world evangelisation have been held. At the All-India Congress at Devlali in 1977, co-operation in cross-cultural evangelism and Church-planting and the relationship of evangelism to social action were the central concerns of the participants*  
Editor. *p. 71*

DR. SIDER opens his essay by contrasting four conflicting views in evangelism and social justice:

1. Evangelism is the primary mission of the Church and is distinct from social action. He cites Billy Graham as the best known representative of this view. The Lausanne covenant and its exponent John Stott also belong to this category, although Sider notes that these representatives also have a passionate concern for justice.

2. The primary mission of the Church is the corporate body of believers, a view which might be called 'radical Anabaptist'. 'By their words, deeds and life together, Christians announce the Good News that by grace it is now possible to live in a new society (the visible body of believers) where all relationships are being transformed.' The Church is part of the content of the Gospel. As John Howard Yoder puts it: 'The primary social structure through which the Gospel works to change other structures is that of the Christian community.'

3. The conversion of individuals and the political restructuring of society are equally important parts of salvation, a view most common in ecumenical circles. Dr. Sider comments: 'Since struggles for economic justice and political freedom are part of salvation, those at Bangkok could say that "salvation is the peace of the people in Vietnam, independence in Angola and justice and reconciliation in Northern Ireland". Given this definition of salvation, it is obvious that one can speak of evangelizing social structures as well as individuals.' While this definition includes the justification and regeneration of the individual, Sider notes that greater emphasis is generally given to the political reconstructing of society in the interests of greater socio-economic justice. He notes that Richard J. Mouw assumes that since the redemptive work of Christ has cosmic implications, therefore all political activity is a part of evangelism. He expresses surprise that some non-conciliar evangelicals, such as Latin American Orlando E. Costas, have adopted this broad set of definitions.

4. Evangelism is politics because salvation is social justice. This definition 'removes the transcendent element of salvation completely and simply equates salvation and social justice'. It is the view of secular theologians such as Gibson Winter and Harvey Cox. [p. 72](#)

## NEW TESTAMENT TERMINOLOGY

### 1. The Gospel

What, according to the New Testament, is the Gospel? It is the Good News about the Kingdom of God ([Mark 1:14-15](#)). It is the Good News concerning God's Son, Jesus the Messiah, who is Saviour and Lord ([Romans 1:3-4](#); [II Corinthians 4:3-6](#)). It is the Good News about the historical Jesus—his death for our sins and his resurrection on the third day ([I Corinthians 15:1-5](#)). And it is the Good News about a radically new kind of community, the people of God, who are already empowered to live according to the standards of the New Age ([Ephesians 3:1-7](#)).

Stated more systematically, the content of the Gospel is (1) justification by faith through the Cross; (2) regeneration through the Holy Spirit; (3) the Lordship of Christ and (4) the fact of the Kingdom.

That the Gospel includes the wonderful news of justification by faith in Christ whose death atoned for our guilt before God need hardly be argued. It is central to the argument of both Galatians (see especially [1:6-17](#); [2:14-21](#); [3:6-14](#)) and Romans (see especially [1:16-17](#)). Nor need we argue the fact that the Good News also includes the fact that the Risen Lord now lives in individual persons who believe in him, regenerating and transforming their egocentric personalities.

Anyone who proclaims a gospel which omits or de-emphasizes the justification and regeneration of individuals is, as Paul said, preaching his own message, not God's good news of salvation in Jesus.

One aspect of justification, however, requires a further comment. Justification never happens apart from repentance from sin. And sin according to the Bible is both personal and social. (The essence of sin, of course, is rebellion against God, but that rebellion has both personal and social manifestations). In the vast majority of cases, the sins of which theologically conservative preachers urge their people to repent are personal: lying, adultery, stealing, pride. Far less often do ministers who are preaching the Gospel call on their listeners to repent of their sinful involvement in institutionalized racism and unjust economic structures. But surely such one-sidedness [p. 73](#) is unbiblical. If anything is clear from the prophets, it is that God abhors unjust economic structures as much as sexual

misconduct or drunkenness (e.g. [Amos 2:6-7](#); [Isaiah 5:8-12](#)).<sup>1</sup> A Biblical presentation of the Gospel must include a clear summons to repent of all forms of sin.

In the third place, it is Good News that this Jesus who justifies and regenerates is also Lord—Lord of all things in heaven and earth. Paul reminded the Corinthians that the Gospel he preaches is that Jesus is Lord:

‘And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case, the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, *but Jesus Christ as Lord*’ ([II Corinthians 4:3-5](#)).

Paul makes the same point in [Romans 10](#). Although he does not use the word *evangelion* until verse [16](#), Paul is clearly thinking of the Gospel in vv. [8-9](#):

‘The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because if you confess with your lips that *Jesus is Lord* ...’ (cf. also [Philippians 2:9-11](#)).

Seldom, however, do we appropriate the full implication of the fact that Jesus’ Lordship is a fundamental element of the Gospel. Positively, the fact that Jesus is Lord means that nothing else can lord it over and dominate our lives. We are liberated from ancient religious taboos, from oppressive cultural patterns, from the principalities and powers. Jesus, not Caesar, Chairman Brezhnev or President Carter, is Lord. Jesus, not parental dreams or ancestors, is Lord. That is exhilarating, liberating Good News.

But there is another side to this aspect of the Gospel. If Jesus’ Lordship is a fundamental aspect of the Gospel, then the call to that radical (i.e. unconditional) discipleship which this Sovereign demands is simply inseparable from the summons to accept the Gospel. [p. 74](#) Acceptance of a costly discipleship dare not be a second stage separated from acceptance of the Gospel.

Jesus repeatedly and pointedly emphasized the cost of discipleship to those, who were contemplating becoming his followers.

‘Now great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned and said to them, “If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple ... For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?”’ ([Luke 14:25-28](#)).

In another statement, Jesus makes it clear that a costly commitment to unconditional discipleship is necessarily and inevitably linked to the appropriation of the saving Gospel:

‘If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.’ ([Mark 8:45](#); cf. also [10:29](#)).

Jesus’ encounter with the rich young man ([Mark 10:17-31](#)) shows that he never hesitated to emphasize the demands of discipleship. It is simply unbiblical to present only that part of the Gospel which corresponds to a person’s felt needs. If we present the Gospel to, say, a businessman who yearns for forgiveness from the guilt he feels for sexual infidelity, we dare not fail to point out that accepting Jesus’ forgiveness will also

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<sup>1</sup> See further my ‘Mischief by Statute’, in *Christianity Today*, 16 July, 1976, pp. 14–19, and *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press 1977), ch.6.

necessarily entail repentance from involvement in sinful economic structures and unconditional acceptance of Jesus as Lord of his business practices.

The Gospel is inseparable from costly discipleship. The one who justifies and regenerates also demands that we forsake all other lords and live a transformed lifestyle after the pattern of his perfect life. Accepting the evangelistic call necessarily and inevitably entails accepting Jesus as Lord of our personal lives, our family life, our racial attitudes, our economics and our politics. Jesus will not be our Saviour if we persistently reject him as our Lord. [p. 75](#)

That does not mean, of course, that genuine Christians live perfectly surrendered, sinless lives. We continue to be justified by grace alone in spite of ongoing sin. But it does mean that conscious, persistent rejection of Jesus' Lordship in any area of our lives is, as Calvin taught, a clear sign that saving faith is not present.

Too often Christians (especially evangelical Protestants in the West) have proclaimed a cheap grace that offers the forgiveness of the Gospel without the discipleship demands of the Gospel. But that is not Jesus' Gospel. There is only one Biblical Gospel. And that is the Good News about one whose demand for submission to his Lordship is as total and unconditional as his mercy is free and unmerited. Since Jesus' Lordship is a central aspect of the Gospel, the summons to a radical discipleship in which Jesus is King of one's entire life is inseparable from a Biblically sound proclamation of the Good News.

The fourth element of the Gospel is less widely perceived to be part of the Good News—in spite of its centrality in the teaching of Jesus! According to the gospels, the core of Jesus' Good News was simply that the Kingdom of God was at hand. [Mark 1:14–15](#) reads: 'Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of God and saying, "the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the ... Gospel" '. Over and over again the gospels define the content of the Good News as the Kingdom which became present in the person and work of Jesus ([Mark 1:14–15](#); [Matthew 4:23](#); [24:14](#); [Luke 4:43](#); [16:16](#)). The Kingdom is a central part of the Gospel.

But what was the nature of the Kingdom Jesus proclaimed? Was it an invisible kingdom in the hearts of individuals? Was it a new political regime of the same order as Rome? One hesitates to simplify difficult questions about which many scholars have written learned tomes. But let me risk presumption. The Kingdom comes wherever Jesus overcomes the power of evil. That happens most visibly in the Church. But it also happens in society at large because Jesus is Lord of the world as well as the Church. As Professor Ladd of Fuller Theological Seminary suggests, the 'Kingdom of God' is a dynamic concept which refers to the kingly reign or rule of God which broke into history decisively in the [p. 76](#) Incarnation and will come in its fulness at our Lord's return.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Church is the most visible manifestation of the Kingdom, the Church is not identical with the Kingdom. The New Testament makes it very clear that the Risen Jesus is Lord of *both* the Church *and* the world ([Matthew 28:18](#); [Ephesians 1:20–22](#); [Revelation 1:5](#)). Furthermore, Colossians teaches that Jesus' death did more than accomplish atonement for believers. Jesus' death was also a decisive victory over the disordered, rebellious structures of our socio-historical existence. At the cross, [Colossians 1:15](#) says, God 'disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him'.

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<sup>2</sup> George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974), chs. 3–8, especially pp. 111–118.



At this point our analysis inevitably touches on the complex issue of the Pauline concept of the principalities and powers.<sup>3</sup> There is a growing consensus, however, that the principalities and powers are not just angelic beings which inhabit the heavens. The powers are also 'religious structures (especially the religious undergirdings of stable ancient and primitive societies), intellectual structures 'ologies and 'isms), moral structures (codes and customs), political structures (the tyrant, the market, the school, the courts, race and nation)'.<sup>4</sup> The powers are the ordered structures of society and the spiritual powers which, in some way we do not fully comprehend, lie behind and undergird religious, intellectual, socio-economic and political structures.

Paul makes it very clear that the powers were created through Jesus Christ. 'For in him are all things created, which are in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, powers; all things are created through him and for him' ([Colossians 1:16](#)). The powers are part of God's p. 77 good creation. Unfortunately, sin has invaded this good creation and the powers have been corrupted to the point where they are now hostile towards God. At the cross, however, God disarmed the principalities and powers ([Colossians 2:15](#)). The risen Lord is now Lord not just of the Church but also of all rule and authority and power and dominion. Ultimately, at his return—and here the breathtaking scope of the cosmic redemption Paul envisaged comes into view—at his return, the Lord will complete his victory over the powers and reconcile all things to God ([I Corinthians 15:24–6](#); [Colossians: 20](#)).

Does this cosmic Pauline view of the work of Christ mean that it is legitimate to apply the word 'salvation' to the improvement of social structures? To answer that question, we must answer another: When are the powers reconciled to God?

The victory over the fallen powers has already proceeded so far that members of the body of believers are freed from the tyranny of the powers. This is the revolutionary message of [Colossians 2](#). Paul refers to the powers who still try to tyrannize believers as 'philosophy', 'human tradition' and 'elemental spirits of the universe' (v. [8](#)). These powers foolishly demand adherence to legalistic dietary regulations and petty religious festivities (vv. [16–23](#)). Paul's response is that precisely because Jesus is Lord of all things (and therefore Lord of the powers) and precisely because he disarmed the powers at the cross, Christians are not subject to their mistaken, tyrannical demands (vv. [9–10](#), [14–15](#)).

One hardly needs to add, however, that Christ has not completed his victory over the powers even though the Church now has the power through Christ to resist their tyranny. Not until Christ's return will Christ totally dethrone every rule and every authority and power thereby completing his victory over sin and all its consequences including death itself.<sup>5</sup> This final, cosmic restoration is so sweeping and all-encompassing that Paul can

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<sup>3</sup> The most important texts are: [Romans 8:38f](#); [I Corinthians 2:8](#); [15:24–28](#); [Ephesians 1:20f](#); [3:10](#); [6:12](#); [Colossians 1:16](#); [2:15](#).

<sup>4</sup> John H. Yoder, *Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 145. See also Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1962); G.B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1956); Oscar Cullmann, *The State in the New Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1956); Clinton Morrison, *The Powers that Be* (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, 1960); Cyril H. Powell, *The Biblical Concept of Power* (London: Epworth, 1963); Albert H. van den Heuvel, *Those Rebellious Powers* (London: SCM, 1966). Richard J. Mouw's *Politics and the Biblical Drama* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1976) has an excellent overview and brief analysis in ch.5.

<sup>5</sup> [Corinthians 15:20–26](#). This only happens 'at his coming' (v. [23](#)). See Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers*, p. 34, for the view that the best translation of *katarchein* in v. [24](#) is 'dethrone'. The powers are not destroyed, they are dethroned. Thus the reconciliation of all things discussed in [Colossians 1:20](#) is an eschatological reconciliation that occurs only at our Lord's return insofar as the powers are concerned. V. [20](#) does not mean that the powers are now reconciled or even that they are being reconciled even though God's ultimate



use the word [p. 78](#) ‘redemption’ in connection with it. In the breath-taking passages in [Romans 8](#), Paul envisions the day when the entire creation through which sin has rampaged like a global hurricane will be liberated from its bondage to sin and its consequences and will obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. At that day, we will attain the *redemption* of our bodies ([Romans 8:23](#)). Presumably one can by extension speak of the eschatological *redemption* of the entire creation. But it is important that the only time Paul used language about salvation and redemption, for anything other than the justification and regeneration and reconciliation occurring now in the Church, is when he discussed the *eschatological* restoration at our Lord’s return. Sin is far too rampant to justify the use of this language in connection with the tragically imperfect human attempts to introduce social justice in the interim between Calvary and the Eschaton.

This does not mean that Christ has nothing to do with the powers now. He is Lord of the world as well as the Church ([Ephesians 1:22](#)). As the sovereign of the universe, he presumably is now at work doing precisely the things the prophets tell us the Lord of history does—namely, destroying unjust societies and creating more just ones. But sin is still too all-pervasive to warrant the application of ‘salvation’ language to the limited, imperfect, albeit extremely important, social justice that does emerge in the time before the Eschaton. Paul reserves ‘salvation’ language for the redemption occurring in the Church.

This discussion of the Pauline view of the principalities and powers shows that one fundamental part of the Good News of the Kingdom must be the exciting announcement that the Reign of God has invaded the distorted social structures of human society. The invasion has proceeded so far that the decisive victory has occurred even though the principalities and powers persist in their sinful, destructive rebellion. But they have been disarmed both in the sense that the Church need not fear or submit to their tyrannical demands and also that the Lord of history is now at work overcoming the injustice created by their rebellion. That is Good News!

But that is only one part of the Gospel of the Kingdom. Obviously the reign of the God is manifested most clearly and visibly where people confess their sins, acknowledge the Lordship of [p. 79](#) Jesus Christ and experience the justifying, regenerating and sanctifying presence of the Risen Lord. The Church is the sphere where the reign of God becomes most apparent. Accordingly, the New Testament says that the Church is part of the Gospel. That the Church is not just an invisible spiritual abstraction peopled with ethereal, justified souls is very clear in the New Testament. Jesus not only forgave sins; he also healed the physical and mental diseases of many who believed. He called together a visible community of disciples joined together by their unconditional submission to his total Lordship over their lives. He summoned this new community of believing disciples to live an ethic and lifestyle sharply different from the rest of society (e.g. [Matthew 5–7](#)). His disciples shared a common purse. The early Church engaged in massive economic sharing ([Acts 4:23–5:16](#); [II Corinthians 8](#)). The new community of Jesus’ disciples was and is (at least it ought to be) a visible social reality sharply distinguished from the world both by its belief and its lifestyle.<sup>6</sup>

Several important N.T. passages show that the fact of this new visible community of God’s people is part of the content of the Gospel. [Ephesians 3](#) is particularly important. In the immediately preceding section, Paul had shown how at the cross Jesus had broken

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plan is total reconciliation at Christ’s return. Hence [Colossians 1:20](#) does not justify the use of ‘salvation’ language for the emergence of social justice now.

<sup>6</sup> For a more extensive discussion, see my *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, chs. 4, 8; and Yoder, *Politics of Jesus*, ch. 2.

through the hostile dividing wall separating Jews and Gentiles, thus creating one new person, one new visible body of Gentile and Jewish believers ([2:13–16](#)). Now in chapter [3](#), Paul proceeds to show that his special mission has been to make known the mystery of Christ. The mystery of Christ is precisely the feet of the new multi-ethnic body of believers: ‘That is, how the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise of Christ Jesus through the Gospel’ (v. [6](#)).

Paul is a minister of the Gospel (v. [7](#)) and his task is precisely to preach the ‘Gospel of the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God’ (vv. [8f](#))—i.e. he proclaimed the Good News that since the cross brought peace with God for Gentiles as well as Jews, therefore the Church is a new visible community where ethnic barriers are already transcended. (Cf. also [Colossians 1:24–27](#); [Romans 16:25–26](#)). The fact that a new visible community now exists [p. 80](#) because of the Cross where ethnic (as well as cultural, sexual, etc.) hostilities are already overcome is a fundamental part of the Gospel.

There is a striking clause that pertains to our discussion in Paul’s plea for a generous collection for the impoverished Jerusalem church. Paul informs the Corinthians that their economic sharing with the Jerusalem church is both an act of fellowship and a submission to their confession of faith in the Gospel ([II Corinthians 9:13](#)). Since the fact of the Church is part of the Gospel, the Corinthians submit to and validate that confession of the Gospel by giving practical economic expression to the oneness of the new people of God. The Biblical Gospel includes the Good News that by faith in Jesus one can join the new visible body of believers where the brothers and sisters are so one in every way that they joyfully accept unlimited economic liability for each other ([Acts 2:42–47, 32–37](#); [II Corinthians 8–9](#) (especially [8:8–14](#))).

The Church of course is still imperfect. Even in the Church the reign of God will be fully perfected only at our Lord’s return. But right now because justification by faith alone frees believers from paralyzing guilt and regeneration and sanctification infuses believers with a powerful new dynamic for a life of costly discipleship, people can enter this new society where all social and economic relationships are being transformed. That a radically new kind of life together in Jesus’ new peoplehood is now available to all who repent, believe and obey is Good News. The Good News of the Kingdom which Jesus announced then pertains not just to a future event. It also pertains to the present reality of the new community. The Church is a fundamental part of the Gospel.

Thus far we have seen that the content of the Gospel is justification, regeneration, Jesus’ Lordship and the fact of the Kingdom. But is there not a ‘secular’ or ‘political’ dimension to the Gospel? Since Jesus said in [Luke 4](#) that he came to free the oppressed, release the captives, and evangelize the poor, is not political activity designed to free the oppressed also evangelism?

[Luke 4:18–19](#) is a crucial text. Reading from the prophet Isaiah, Jesus defined his mission as follows:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor (*evangelasathai ptochois*). [p. 81](#) He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’

In this text Jesus identifies several aspects of his mission. He says he has been sent to release the captives, heal the blind and free the oppressed. That this is a fundamental part of his total mission is beyond question. But he does not equate the task of helping the oppressed with preaching the Gospel to the poor. Nor does he say one task is more important than another. They are both important, but they are also distinct.

The same point is clear in other passages. In [Matthew 11:1–6](#), Jesus responded to John the Baptist’s question: ‘Are you the Messiah?’ by saying:

‘Go and tell John what you see and hear: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the dead are raised up and the poor have good news preached to them (are evangelized).’

Again Jesus does not equate preaching the Gospel to (evangelizing) the poor with cleansing lepers. He does all these things. And they are all important but the one activity cannot be merged with the other.

A twofold mission is also apparent when Jesus sent out the twelve disciples. He commissioned them to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal ([Luke 9:2](#); [Mark 6:12–13](#)).

One final example is important. In both [Matthew 4:23](#) and [9:35](#), the evangelist summarizes Jesus’ ministry as follows: ‘And he went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing every disease and infirmity among the people’ (see also [Luke 9:1–6, 11](#)). Here there are three distinct types of tasks: teaching, preaching the Gospel, and healing sick people. They are not identical tasks. They should not be confused. None dare be omitted. All are crucial parts of the mission of Jesus. But for our purposes the most important conclusion is that none of these texts equates healing the blind or liberating the oppressed with evangelism. These texts in no way warrant calling political activity evangelism. There is [p. 82](#) no New Testament justification for talking about ‘evangelizing’ political structures.<sup>7</sup> According to the New Testament, then, evangelism involves the announcement (through word *and deed*) of the Good News that there is forgiveness of sins through the cross; that the Holy Spirit will regenerate twisted personalities; that Jesus is Lord; and that the Kingdom has already broken into history even though it will come in its fulness only when our Lord returns.

## 2. Salvation

What is the meaning of the word ‘salvation’ in the New Testament? Perhaps the best New Testament argument for adopting a broad definition of salvation can be developed from the use of the word ‘save’ (*sozo*) in the synoptic Gospels. In about one of every four descriptions of Jesus’ healings, the synoptic accounts use the word ‘save’ to describe physical healing by Jesus.<sup>8</sup> In [Mark 6:56](#), the text says: ‘As many as touched (his garment) were healed’ (*esozonto*).<sup>9</sup> One could cite other similar illustrations. It is quite clear of course, that the verb ‘save’ connotes more than physical healing. Whereas in [Mark 10:52](#) Jesus told the blind man whom he had healed, ‘Your faith has saved you’, in [Luke 7:36–50](#) he spoke identical words to the sinful woman who anointed his feet even though he had not healed her body.

It is not entirely implausible to argue that since the gospels apply the word ‘save’ to physical healing, it is also legitimate to extend the word to cover all kinds of activity done

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<sup>7</sup> One might try to argue from [Luke 4:43](#) (‘I must preach the good news of the kingdom to the other cities also’) that cities (political entities) were ‘evangelized’. But surely the text means that he wanted to *preach* to *persons* in those cities. [Matthew 28:19](#) calls on Christians to ‘make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ...’ Is that a call to disciple or evangelize political structures? I think not. The text reads *matheteusate panta ta ethne, baptizontes autous*. The shift from the neuter *ta ethne* to the masculine *autous* indicates that he is calling on us to disciple *persons*. Only individuals can respond to the Gospel.

<sup>8</sup> *Sozo* is used 16 times in this way; *therapeuo* 33 times; *iaomai* 15 times. See *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. G. W. Bromiley, 9 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964–74), VII, 990 (hereafter *TWNT*).

<sup>9</sup> So too [Mark 5:28–34](#), [10:52](#), etc. So too occasionally in Acts ([4:9](#) and [14:9](#)) and once in James ([5:15](#)).

in the name of the Lord to liberate sick and oppressed persons. If there is a New p. 83 Testament justification for using the word 'salvation' to apply to political liberation, it is here.

But one must immediately point out that the usage just noted is by no means the primary usage of the terms 'save' and 'salvation' in the New Testament. These words in fact are not key words in the synoptic tradition.<sup>10</sup> When they do appear elsewhere in the synoptics, they refer to entering into the Kingdom or following Jesus. When Jesus informed his disciples that it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom, the startled disciples asked: 'Then who can be saved?' Being 'saved' and entering the Kingdom are synonymous.<sup>11</sup> In light of this and similar passages, we can say that someone is saved as he enters the new peoplehood of God where all relationships are being transformed.

The story of Zaccheus is striking in this connection ([Luke 19:1-10](#)). After his encounter with Jesus, Zaccheus repented of his sins. As a rich, corrupt tax collector who had profited from an oppressive economic structure, he repented of his 'social' sins and promptly gave half of his ill-gotten gain to feed the poor. Jesus immediately assured him: 'Today salvation has come to this house.' This text does not mean that wherever economic justice appears, salvation is present. Since Jesus had come to save the lost, he had sought out lost Zaccheus (v. [10](#)). But it was only after Zaccheus had submitted to Jesus' message and repented of his sins that Jesus assured him of salvation. Salvation means repentance, submitting to Jesus, and entering the new community of Jesus' disciples where all relationships including economic relationships are being redeemed.

In Paul the usage is unambiguous. One is saved as one confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes that God raised him from the dead ([Romans 10:10-13](#)). We obtain salvation as we hear the Gospel and believe that we are justified by faith rather than works ([Romans 1:16-17](#)). Salvation for us sinners is freedom (through the Cross) from the just wrath of God: 'While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since therefore we are now justified by his p. 84 blood, much more shall we be saved by his life.'<sup>12</sup> Elsewhere in the New Testament, the connotation is similar. The usual meaning of salvation in Acts is the forgiveness of sins.<sup>13</sup> In James, the verb 'save' connotes deliverance from divine punishment at the final judgment.<sup>14</sup>

The author of the lengthy article on these words in Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* summarizes his findings in this way:

'New Testament *soteria* does not refer to earthly relationships. Its content is not, as in the Greek understanding, well-being, health of body and soul. Nor is it the earthly liberation of the people of God from the heathen yoke as in Judaism .. It has to do solely with man's relationship to God ... In the New Testament ... only the events of the historical coming,

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<sup>10</sup> 'Elsewhere in the core of the synoptic tradition *sozo* and *soteria* are very much in the background.' *TWNT*, VII, 991.

<sup>11</sup> See also [Luke 13:22-30](#) where an eschatological entry into the Kingdom is clearly in view. Cf. also [Mark 13:13, 20](#).

<sup>12</sup> [Romans 5:9](#). Quite frequently, as here, Paul speaks of salvation as something which is still partly future (cf. [Ephesians 2:5-8](#); [Romans 11:11](#); [II Corinthians 6:2](#)).

<sup>13</sup> See *TWNT*, VII, 997. Frequently too it is a general term used to describe what happened as the Church proclaimed Jesus' death and resurrection (e.g. [Acts 4:12](#); [13:26](#); [16:30-31](#)).

<sup>14</sup> *TWNT*, VII, 996. See [James 5:20](#); [4:12](#). The words 'save' and 'salvation' are used hardly at all in the Johannine literature (*TWNT*, VIII, 997).

suffering, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth bring a salvation from God's wrath by the forgiveness of sins.'<sup>15</sup>

One must conclude then that the dominant connotation of the words 'save' and 'salvation' throughout the New Testament does not encourage the adoption of a broad definition of salvation. The use of the verb 'save' with reference to physical healing in one quarter of the synoptic accounts of Jesus' healing offers the only substantial New Testament warrant for expanding the word 'salvation' to refer to social justice brought about through politics. The vast majority of the New Testament passages point in the other direction.

### 3. Redemption

Does the New Testament use of the term redemption (*apolutrosis*) offer any additional help? Should Christians think of political p. 85 activity producing 'redeemed' social structures? Paul told the Christians at Rome that they were justified by God's grace through faith by means of the 'redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith' ([Romans 3:24–25](#)). Paul also explicitly equated redemption with forgiveness of sins. After reminding the Colossian Christians that they had been delivered from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of the Son, Paul added that it is in Jesus that 'we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins' ([Colossians 1:13–14](#); [Luke 21:28](#); [Romans 8:23](#)).

There is also an important eschatological dimension to redemption. We are sealed unto the day of redemption ([Ephesians 1:14](#); [4:30](#); [Luke 21:28](#); [Romans 8:23](#)). Especially important is the fantastic Pauline vision of eschatological restoration in [Romans 8:18ff](#). At our Lord's return, the entire creation will be set free from sin and all its consequences. Even our bodies will experience 'redemption' (v. [23](#)). At the Eschaton, the whole creation will be redeemed.

When then is redemption? It is the forgiveness of sins offered to persons who believe that Jesus' cross is the expiation of their sins. And it is also the total reversal of all the evil consequences of sins which our Lord will accomplish at his return. Redemption then is not something that happens to secular economic and political structures now. It is something that happens to persons as they are in Christ.<sup>16</sup>

### A FIFTH OPTION: DISTINCT YET EQUAL (SUMMARY)

In the light of New Testament usage, Ronald Sider argues that 'evangelism and social action are equally important, but quite distinct, aspects of the total mission of the Church'.

He states: 'Evangelism involves the announcement (through words and deeds) of the Good News of justification, regeneration, p. 86 the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the fact of the Kingdom. Only individuals can respond to this Good News. Hence it is confusing nonsense to talk of evangelizing political or economic structures. He adds: 'Social concern involves both relief for those suffering from social injustice and also the political

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<sup>15</sup> *TWNT*, VII, 1002.

<sup>16</sup> F. Buchsel in *TWNT*, IV, 354: '*apolutrosis* is bound up strictly with the person of Jesus. We have it in him, [Colossians 1:14](#); [Ephesians 1:7](#); [Romans 3:24](#). By God he is made unto us *apolutrosis*, [1 Corinthians 1:30](#). Redemption cannot be regarded, then, as a fact which he has established, but which then has its own intrinsic life and power apart from his person, so that one can have it without being in personal fellowship with him. To give to redemption this objective autonomy is to part company with Paul. For him here is redemption only within the circumference of faith in Jesus.'



restructuring of society for the sake of greater social justice. To label this increased social justice “salvation” however is confusing. Until our Lord’s return, all attempts to restructure society will at best produce only significantly less imperfect societies tragically pockmarked by the consequences of the Fall.’ In discussing the debate between evangelism and social action Sider says, ‘The time has come for all Biblical Christians to refuse using the sentence: “The primary task of the Church is ..” ’ Jesus is our only perfect model and he engaged fully in both without defining which was primary. Sider concludes with a very brief discussion on several aspects of their inter-relationship. Sin is both personal and structural. Evangelical Protestants who regularly preach coming to Jesus meaning ‘forsaking pot, pubs and pornography’ often fail to add that coming to Jesus necessarily involves ‘repentance of and conversion from the sin of involvement in structural evils such as economic injustice and institutionalized racism. Biblical evangelism will call for repentance of one’s involvement in both individual and structural sins’. He thinks that where the Church practises social and economic equality among the body of believers it will in fact constitute a challenge to the political *status quo*: ‘The mere existence of the Church as a new community where all social relationships are being redeemed can have a significant impact on society if the Church offers a visible model of the way people can live in community in more loving and just ways.’ Social action sometimes facilitates the task of evangelism though not necessarily so. ‘Biblical social action will contain, always implicitly and often explicitly, a call to repentance.’ Sider argues that it is not helpful to use the words ‘the Great Commission’ to connote evangelism and ‘the Great Commandment’ to connote social concern. Each obligates and involves the other.

#### *A Response by John R. W. Stott*

John Stott was invited to respond to Ronald Sider’s essay, which, [p.87](#) because of the importance of the subject and as a personal friend, he was grateful to do. Having listed the points of agreement, he calls for further reflection on three issues raised by Dr. Sider:

1. The relationship between evangelism and social action. He defends the Lausanne Covenant’s affirmation that ‘in the Church’s mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary’. Arguing that *if one has to choose*, he believes eternal salvation is more important than temporal welfare, but adds that one *should not normally have to choose*. John Stott asks for a threefold recognition:

- a. That the two are distinct but equal partners, each existing in its own right as an expression of Christian love, and that both should normally be included to some degree in every local Church’s programme.
- b. Every Christian is a witness and also a servant. The existential situation will often determine the priority: for example, ‘the good Samaritan’s ministry to the brigands’ victim was not to stuff tracts into his pockets but to pour oil into his wounds. For this was what the situation demanded’.
- c. God calls different people to different ministries and endows them with appropriate gifts. ‘Although we should resist polarization between evangelism and social action, we should not resist specialization’. Some are called to be evangelists, others social workers and others political activists. Within each local Church, which is an expression of the body of Christ, there is a place for individual specialists and for specialist groups.

2. The Kingdom of God and the Lordship of Christ. John Stott argues for a stronger recognition of the relationship between the Kingdom of God and the Lordship of Christ. Against the danger of emphasizing only their ethical demands, he suggests that they both mean total blessings as well as total demand. ‘For, Biblically speaking, to preach one is to



preach the other; they are inseparable.’ He asks for clarification of Sider’s statement: ‘Jesus’ death was also a decisive victory over the disordered, rebellious structure of our socio-historical existence’. Stott wants to insist that ‘the Kingdom of God in the New Testament is a fundamentally [p. 88](#) Christological concept and it may be said to exist only where Jesus Christ is consciously acknowledged as Lord’.

3. The principalities and powers. John Stott questions the increasingly popular view that Paul’s principalities and powers are not personal angelic or demonic agencies so much as structures of thought, tradition and society. He traces this view from Gordon Rupp’s *Principalities and Powers* (1952) to today. He suspects its origin goes back to the embarrassment of accepting Biblical angelology and demonology. He asks: ‘When Paul refers to the creation of principalities, is he really talking about the divine institution of structures?’ He questions Sider’s interpretation of [Ephesians 3:10](#), since the context is ‘in the heavenly places’.

He concludes with a note of appreciation for the initiative and leadership that Dr. Sider gives in understanding the partnership of evangelism and social action.

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# Community and Mission: the Moravian Model

by Professor J. M. VAN DER LINDE

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*Does the Moravian movement founded 250 years ago have any relevance for the renewal of our contemporary mission theology and methods, and point to a more Biblical way to social service and justice for the poor and oppressed? This article makes illuminating reading.*

Editor.

COUNT NNICOLAUS LUDWIG VON ZINZENDORF, born in 1700 and who died in 1760, was descended from high Austrian nobility. His grandfather sided with the Reformation and had to emigrate to Germany. As a boy, Zinzendorf was brought up and educated in the best Lutheran pietistic circles. Philip Jacob Spener was his godfather and he attended a boarding school in Halle led by another spiritual giant, namely August Hermann Francke. As pastor, professor and practical organiser, Francke inspired the young Zinzendorf deeply.<sup>1</sup>

Zinzendorf’s rank as a count of the Empire proved to be both a help and a hindrance to his calling. His family would not allow him to become an ordinary theologian, pastor or missionary. He had to devote himself to the service of the State, and accordingly he

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<sup>1</sup> John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (New York-Nashville, 1956). Erich Beyreuther, *Zinzendorf*, 3 Vols, 1957–1961.

studied law and for some years filled a post at the Saxon court. However, the arrival in 1722 of refugees from Moravia seeking asylum on his estate helped him find his true vocation, so that Zinzendorf developed into a pastoral and missionary leader with few equals in any age.

These Moravians were members of the underground church of the 'hidden seeds' in Czechoslovakia, which was established in 1457, but whose origin can be traced back some 50 years earlier to p. 90 the Reform movement started by John Hus in Prague.<sup>2</sup> This church was so violently persecuted by the Counter-Reformation in Czechoslovakia that in the end nearly all the remaining members fled to Germany. There, people from various churches and sects joined them to establish a settlement on Zinzendorf's estate in Saxony which was given the name of *Herrnhut* (under the Lord's care). As a fellowship of believers from many denominations this new settlement became a local realisation of the universal Church. As a political unit it became a republic of Christ, a Christocracy. Although those who had actually come from Moravia formed a minority, their spiritual and missionary contribution was so great that to this day the movement in five continents still carries the name Moravian.

Zinzendorf was the landlord of this new community and both he and his wife devoted their possessions and their many talents to building up a local government which should reflect the Lordship of Christ. Strict church discipline was introduced together with a constitution that combined both democratic and authoritarian principles. The private property of all the members was devoted to furthering the religious cause. Herrnhut soon became a centre of the pietistic movement second only to Halle.

Zinzendorf, as a member of the Lutheran Church, had no intention that Herrnhut should become a new denomination. His vision was that members from many denominations would join in special groups for fellowship in faith and work without relinquishing membership in their own native churches. Through pluriformity would be manifested the unity of the Church of the Lord. However, the original Moravians, coming as they did from a church that had undergone a reformation a century before Luther wished Herrnhut to become an expression of the renewed unity of the Moravian brethren, the *Unitas Fratrum* that had come into existence in Moravia in 1457, and so it happened.

## A PLACE WHERE HEAVEN AND EARTH MEET

The renewed unity of the Brethren of Moravia became something unique in the history of mission. 'The whole life of the P. 91 community served only one purpose: to be at the disposal of the Saviour for His plan in the world under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.'<sup>3</sup> A small but entire church was dedicated to the proclamation of the Gospel: 'mission was the very reason of its being'. The dynamic and strength of this new phenomenon in Protestant Christianity was a strict Christocentric theology. Renewal of man meant renewal in Christ. Zinzendorf was not a Christomonist. He believed in God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but for him, the message of the New Testament revolved around the fact that, in Christ, God had come to man and had become one of them.

Inwardly and outwardly, daily life in Herrnhut and the many later settlements in other countries came to be defined by this Christocratic ideal. The 'lot' was cast to ascertain the guidance of the Lord. Every morning 'watch-words', Biblical texts or hymns, were passed

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Langton, *History of the Moravian Church* (London, 1956) J. Taylor Hamilton, Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church; The Renewed Unitas Fratrum, 1722-1957* (Bethlehem (Penn), 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Bernhard Kruger, *The Pear Tree Blossoms. The History of the Moravian Church in South Africa* (Genadendal, 1966), p. 14.

on from house to house as daily paroles for the ‘warriors’ (*streiter*) on guard for the Lord. Since 1731 these watch-words have been printed as daily textbooks and today they are translated and used in many countries. In order to facilitate pastoral guidance and instruction, the congregation in Herrnhut and the other Moravian settlements in Europe were divided into groups called ‘choirs’ according to age and sex. As such, these choirs had nothing to do with singing, but divided the church into groups of married brethren, married sisters, single brethren, single sisters, boys and girls. Besides the choirs, the congregation was further sub-divided into bands. Zinzendorf came upon this idea after hearing a sermon about the visit which Mary, the mother of Jesus made to Elisabeth the mother of John the Baptist. These bands were again divided into brothers and sisters and the object of these small groups was to deepen the love of the one for the other and so to stimulate the inward growth of the congregation. As Zinzendorf expressed it, these bands were to consist of people ‘who converse ... on the whole state of their hearts and conceal nothing from each other, but who have wholly committed themselves to each other’s care in the Lord .. cordiality, secrecy and daily intercourse is of great service to such individuals and ought never to be neglected.’<sup>4</sup> p. 92

John Wesley learned much about the band system during his visit to Herrnhut in 1738. On August 8th of that year he recorded in his journal: ‘The people of Herrnhut are divided .. into about 90 bands, each of which meets at least twice, but most of them three times a week, to confess their faults to one another, that they may be healed.’<sup>5</sup>

## FOCUSSED THEOLOGY

Zinzendorf did not draft a system of Christian doctrine. Karl Barth paid him the compliment of calling him an ‘irregular theologian’, and one of his biographers has written: ‘Zinzendorf has given utterance to ideas’. Zinzendorf did include theology in the hymns he wrote, in the addresses he gave, in the meetings he attended in many countries with many different churches, in the synods, in his missionary instructions, in the church order he helped to formulate, in the letters he wrote, and so on. He was truly a man-in-mission, his wife was a woman-in-mission, and the Moravian congregations formed a church-in-mission.

Zinzendorf simplified and brought to a focus traditional orthodox theology. Not out of laziness, but because he wanted ordinary men and women to live at the nerve-centre of God’s salvation. He wrote: ‘We believe that the whole theology needed to enable us to stand before the holy angels without shame can be written in big characters on an octavo sheet. Anyone who neglects this basic theology fails to experience salvation’. His reduction went even further. Not theology on an octavo sheet only, but theology concentrated on one point: that of justification. He called that *the point* (*das Puntchen*). ‘We must be witnesses to that one central point of theology around the world. Not morality, nor philosophy, and still less an orthodox-scholastic system of doctrine, but “the simple doctrine of Jesus’ suffering and death” and the eternal ransom through Jesus Christ our reconciliation.’

Saving theology, that is, a theology for life and work, was for Zinzendorf always specific and never general. Betterman called Zinzendorf’s theology ‘A theology of concreteness’. It could be p. 93 summed up in one name, the Name of Jesus. Zinzendorf’s

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<sup>4</sup> A. J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf, the Ecumenical Pioneer* (London, 1962).

<sup>5</sup> John Wesley, Journal II, August 8, 1738. Clifford W. Towlson, *Moravian and Methodist Relationship and Influence in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1957).

missionary instruction read simply: 'Tell the story of the Lamb'. To tell the name of Jesus was not enough. It was necessary to witness to Jesus Christ crucified, but the Cross must not become an abstraction. Jesus Christ crucified means the Lamb, and that in turn means blood and wounds. Again, blood and wounds point to the foolishness of the Gospel of the Cross ... that the Son of God should need to shed his blood to deliver man. All philosophising was thus put to shame.

'The Pietists of Halle were God's grammarians; they looked at their own sins first and then through their tears at the cross. Zinzendorf taught the Moravians to be God's troubadours; they looked first to the cross and rejoiced because they found there a covering for all their sins.'<sup>6</sup> For a time Zinzendorf concentrated his theology on the *pleura* or 'side wounds' of Jesus. In a hymn he wrote for the congregations at home and the missionaries abroad he expressed this feeling as follows: 'We all feel well in the side wound of Jesus. In Europe up to the North Pole, In the Indies, and in Asia and Africa, be Jesus with us'. 'To be saved is to be in the *pleura*. Where are the Christians? In the whole wide world. They find their freedom to be world-citizens in this specific symbol. Concentration of faith liberates for universal cosmopolitanism. Christians are free for the world because they are rooted and anchored in something very specific; the wound in the side of one man.'

This type of Johannine reduction and concentration of theology was to some extent a protest against the rationalistic and orthodox-scholastic frame of mind of the time. The message of blood and wounds which exalted the suffering Saviour was highly effective in winning converts and this approach brought about the most creative period of the Moravian movement. But it was also open to morbid distortions and a decade later led to a regrettable episode in Moravian history.<sup>7</sup> Zinzendorf turned from these extravagances and devoted himself to a contemplation of Christ. He was convinced that true religion is not rooted in knowledge, but in a sense of Jesus' presence and love. For him, loving fellowship p. 94 with the Saviour was the essential manifestation of religion. 'What is the sum-total of the Gospel, which one must seek in all things and on which all fellowship in the spirit must be based? I call this, in my manner of expressing myself, a personal relationship with the Saviour.'

## THE RENEWAL OF MAN

Herrnhut was convinced that the renewal of man begins and is continued in a genuine fellowship grounded in the Gospel of Christ crucified. Such a renewed life must necessarily express itself and multiply in valiant witness and service.<sup>8</sup> 'Herrnhut and the Moravians in the other settlements received in a few years the strength to send out itinerant messengers to awaken the "sleeping" in other churches in Europe and to provide them with a focal point of co-operation in the Diaspora movement. They made plans for all denominations to discover each other and to be enriched by mutual service.' A mere ten years after their beginning the first missionaries were sent to the West Indies. 'In the workshop of Herrnhut, the pattern of modern Christian witness and extension was being shaped.'

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<sup>6</sup> J. C. Hoekendijk, *Zinzendorf*. An unpublished manuscript.

<sup>7</sup> John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (New York-Nashville, 1956), p. 116.

<sup>8</sup> A. J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer* (London, 1952), p. 61.

By their living in Christ and through the power of the Spirit, those at Herrnhut sought only to be used in God's service. One of their hymns runs as follows:

*Herrnhut will exist only as long  
as the works of your hand  
rule unimpeded within its community.  
Let love be the sacred band  
till ripe and found worthy for Thee  
we as good salt may be scattered  
so that the earth may thereby be bettered.*

A place therefore where heaven and earth join for the sake of this world. *The earth must be bettered* and Christians, as those who have been renewed, have to be used as *good salt*. Zinzendorf placed much emphasis on fellowship as the basis of being *p. 95* used in this way. For him there was no Christianity without fellowship.

*Members—on our Head depending,  
Lights—reflecting Him our Sun,  
Brethren—His commands attending,  
We in Him, our Lord, are one.*

Nevertheless this represented only one aspect of the Moravian community. The basis of the community life and its evangelistic strength was the emphasis on Christian religion as something personal and individual, directly related to the Saviour. Zinzendorf stressed that man stands alone before God. Each individual is unique and constitutes a whole and unrepeatable person. According to him, 'God is adapting Himself to the varied ways of each man, woman and child, going His specific ways with them in each place and according to the different conditions of continents and countries, cultures and traditions'. Encounters between the living God and real persons always transcend our schemes of conversion and regeneration. 'It is not in accord with the Gospel to prescribe rules or methods to which souls must adhere, or to desire among all the same spiritual attitudes.' Leave to Christ 'the way in which He can and wishes to approach Souls'.

In his stress on religious individualism, Zinzendorf could go as far as to say: 'There are as many fashions of belief as there are faithful souls.' He opposed any pressure to conform to a normal type of piety, and added that 'in the congregation everybody must remain himself and nobody has to conform to others'. 'On this individuality, my brothers and sisters, must we be attentive, and in this respect everyone must have his or her private relation with the Lamb.'<sup>9</sup>

So the life of the renewed community at Herrnhut was centred round the adoration of the Lamb that had been slain. Zinzendorf and the brothers and sisters at Herrnhut let the scandal and the offence of the Cross of the Lamb that had been wounded and slain shatter the deistic composure of 18th century established Christianity and the varnished decorum of polite society. Every brother *p. 96* and sister had his own special way of living with the Lord, but at the same time all shared the same base. No spiritual uniformity but a 'spirit of community'. Zinzendorf defined this 'spirit of community' as the 'Spirit of the Lord, and the Spirit of Wisdom to receive the specific point of religion'.

Zinzendorf with his hitherto unknown accent on the individuality of believers had at the same time an undoubted genius for fellowship. He organised the community life in the Moravian settlements along lines which were old as well as new, including the 'Night

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Baumgart, *Zinzendorf als Wegbereiter historischen denkens* (Lubeck-Hamburg 1969), p. 47.



Watch' as hourly intercession, and the 'Love Feast' (*agape*) as it existed in the early Church. We have already spoken of the 'choirs' and the 'bands' and, in addition, there were the many forms of worship, the foot-washing, the celebration of the Lord's Supper and the abundance of singing and music in all the services. Unlike the Pietists who looked for a painful conviction of sin in every conversion, Zinzendorf and the Moravians found no cause for pity or sorrow in the Cross but only a feeling of intense gratitude which made them ever ready—

*heerfully to testify  
How our spirit, soul and body  
Do in God our Saviour joy.*<sup>10</sup>

This missionary theology, full of joy, worship and service, created new types of Christians. 'We must carry an image of our incarnate God in our hearts and whoever is too refined and philosophical for this, is an unconverted person and an alien from God's household.' All the pomp of man's possessions, his class prejudice, his intellectual pride and denominational bigotry must collapse before this image of the Lamb. All that separates man from man and Christian from Christian must be laid at the foot of the Cross.

While crossing the ocean on his journey to Georgia, John Wesley was deeply impressed by the example of the Moravians on board who in the midst of a terrible storm sang their hymns joyfully and without fear because it was time for their sung service. Happiness freed these people from the fear of death. They did not go into mourning at the death of a loved one, but sang hymns of triumph and to this day the Moravian funeral processions move towards God's acre to the accompaniment of trombones. Adoration of the Lamb created an 'Easter people'.

## MISSIONARY THEOLOGY AND METHOD

Zinzendorf found the focus of his concentrated theology in the adoration of the Lamb and in the message of the Kingdom of God. His contribution to missionary theology is his insight that the Kingdom of God and the inhabited earth are interrelated. They are in fact destined for each other. According to Zinzendorf, the Kingdom of God was the 'permanent action of God by means of angels and chosen people to universalise salvation, to facilitate the present order of salvation, to prepare for the third coming of the Saviour, to make people long for Him and to bring their hearts into an attitude pleasing to Him'.<sup>11</sup>

Jesus Christ is the subject of the apostolate. All initiatives are his, and he is the only leader of the Unity in the home countries and on the mission fields. The concentrated, simplified theology of Herrnhut was held to be the theology for all continents. At the same time, Zinzendorf tried to prevent the exportation of European denominations and sects to other continents. The concept of a simplified theology that could be written on an octavo sheet in big characters would enable indigenous churches in other continents to come to an interpretation of the Gospel which would be meaningful in their own context. In this Zinzendorf was far ahead of his time. He permitted the introduction of Herrnhut organisation and discipline in Moravian missions, but warned against 'applying the Herrnhut yardstick'.

Native helpers were enlisted as soon as possible, but in many cases there was considerable delay because the Moravians chose to work in the very difficult slave areas

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<sup>10</sup> A. J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer* (London, 1952), p. 73.

<sup>11</sup> O. Uttendorfer, *Die wichtigsten Missionsinstruktionen Zinzendorfs* (Herrnhut, 1913), p. 6.



of the Caribbean where converts among the slaves were not free to attend church. Indeed the Colonists feared the Moravians as a revolutionary people and a danger to the sugar economy.

The missionary theology of the Moravians was developed by Zinzendorf in conjunction with the brethren on the field, as they p. 98 wrote their diaries, sent each other letters, and exchanged their experiences. As has been stated above, Zinzendorf paid attention to the particularity of the Lord's dealings with each individual, and recognised the importance of the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who were to be reached. Zinzendorf's missionary instructions contained the following precept: 'Do not direct your work towards a heathen whom you do not find disposed towards righteousness, because Christ is sending His messengers to those of the same nature as Cornelius and the official of queen Candace.' Thinking of his time at the Saxonian court where nobody could enter the presence of the king without being invited, or could even knock on his door loudly, Zinzendorf drew a parallel with missionary work. 'We can only scratch on the door,' he said; 'the people who have been rightly disposed by the Spirit will hear and we shall find them.' 'Missionaries do not make new people, but they find them. God is in permanent action and we only have to follow Him.'

How should the people be approached by the missionaries? In a hymn, Zinzendorf indicates that he prefers the Emmaus approach. Jesus joined the travellers and started a friendly conversation with them. As Jesus disclosed what had happened, their hearts were set on fire in an 'Emmaus' fashion (*Emmauntisch heizen*). In a missionary catechism, Zinzendorf indicates what missionaries should do. 'All heathen know that God exists. The Gospel tells them His name. Faith in Jesus is all that is needed to be saved and everyone who teaches more than that before they come to a saving knowledge of the Saviour hinders their conversion by their very teaching.'

Question: 'Who made man?'

Answer: 'The Lord God.'

Question: 'What is His name?'

Answer: 'Jesus Christ.'<sup>12</sup>

In other words, there was to be no preparatory teaching or precatechism, but one had to go straight to the name of God-in-service (*Amtsgott*), namely Jesus Christ. p. 99

## THE REFORMATION OF THE WORLD

Zinzendorf's missionary theology of the renewal of man differs from Comenius' universal philosophy both in its method and its perspective. In a workpaper, Comenius sketched a plan for the universal improvement of human affairs. It amounts to a worldwide programme to educate all men in all places for a renewed life in God. Comenius' missionary theology sought to achieve a theocracy for the whole world. Schools, churches and governments are there to serve the universal return of mankind to God's holy order of eternal joy.

Zinzendorf never wrote any system of doctrine nor any plan for the renewal of the world. At the same time, Herrnhut knew that the earth had to be bettered and that Jesus Christ was the firstborn of the new creation. Christians are everywhere the firstfruits of the harvest of the final Kingdom. There could be no justification without sanctification and sanctification is more than a by-product of justification. I do not think that Herrnhut aimed directly for world reform, but Moravians both by their life and their work made a contribution for reform *in* the world, and even in certain instances attacked bad and unjust structures. I will mention three points:

1. In the Middle Ages, monasteries and the new towns played a significant role in the renewal of society. The monks lived holistically and in the course of teaching man his way to God, they changed and reformed the structures under which men were suffering. New towns also had a special significance. They breathed the atmosphere of freedom. In the country, slavery and serfdom was possible but not in these new towns, in which new economic forms, trade patterns and industrial enterprises were being developed. Paradise was not yet at hand, but the monasteries and the new towns opened a door towards greater participation of man in his own destiny. In some degree, the Moravian settlements combined the life of the monasteries with that of the new towns. There was community life, a community spirit, and participation of all members in problems and in their solutions. There was also pastoral care and an early form of a small responsible society. If there was p. 100 no work for newcomers, work was created for them. These settlements were small republics of Christ, where people lived in security from birth to death. In an old rough society, where everyone had to fend for himself, but only a few could do so, they represented tokens of a new, sanctified and ordered life.

2. Slavery. The Moravians had the courage to undertake mission in areas where they were very unpopular. Western European countries profited considerably from slavery and the slave trade, and the churches they established in areas where slavery was rife were in effect commercial churches that had to provide pastoral guidance for the officials, soldiers and merchants there. As such, these churches were, or were supposed to be, on the side of the slave-masters. Only free churches could be on the side of the slaves. The Moravians were the first free church in the Caribbean. Directly they could do nothing to change the kingdom of king sugar.<sup>13</sup> What they were able to do was to establish a state within a state in which Europeans and blacks could live a sanctified, renewed life together in the Lord. The feasts of worship, the choirs and the bands, the love feasts and the many other spiritual channels the Moravians provided for the slaves gradually placed the Kingdom of God over against the kingdom of sugar.

The Moravian missionaries taught the Christian faith first, and then, as far as possible (because they liked impossible things), reading and writing. 'Religion with letters' was feared and forbidden in the colonies in those days. The Moravians called the slaves brothers and sisters and, to the extent that they were admitted to the plantations, shared their life. In case where they were not admitted they either bought their own plantations, or worked as carpenters, doctors or in some other capacity alongside the plantations. Most of the Moravians were laymen and this constituted their strength. It also gave them flexibility and placed them in the middle of everyday life. They started workshops for young slaves and educated them to work and carry responsibility. Education for spiritual freedom first, in the hope and expectation that total liberation would follow. In Surinam and also in other countries, the Moravians did a wonderful work which today receives national recognition.

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<sup>13</sup> J. M. van der Linde, *Herrnhuter im Karibischen Raum, Unitas Fratrum* (Utrecht, 1975), pp. 41–60.

3. The liberation of Baltic peasants from feudal servitude. At the end of 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries, Moravian laymen came to Estonia and Latvia and worked among the rural population which was still largely in feudal servitude. They were helped by the fact that some of the Baltic noblemen had attended Moravian boarding schools in Germany and favoured the expansion of their communities.

The Moravians brought their characteristics of simplified theology, pastoral guidance, worship, music, and song with them, and their forms of piety proved to be outstandingly suited to the national character of these Baltic people. The educational contribution made by the Moravians helped to make them self-confident and independent. As in the case of slavery in America, the Moravians never elaborated a theory of education for liberation and independence. In many respects, Zinzendorf and the Moravians were as conservative as the Lutherans and did not revolt against the social and economic *status quo*, but they had already achieved important social and economic changes in their own community. Nobleman, peasant, scholar and labourer were equals in the congregation and also in the life of the settlement. Long before the French Revolution, the Moravians had broken through the middle wall that separated the social classes. External disparity had largely been submerged by spiritual equality. Labourers from the beginning had been leaders in the congregation and members of the nobility and other persons of high rank had willingly submitted to their leadership.

The education which some of the Baltic noblemen had received in Moravian boarding schools helped them to adopt a less severe attitude towards the peasant serfs. The Moravians taught obedience to the authorities but at the same time they led these serfs to spiritual and social emancipation. They helped to develop various trades among the Estonians and Latvians, and this in turn sharpened their intellect, their behaviour and their sense of responsibility. By means of voluntary gifts, the Baltic Moravians built chapels which were outstanding examples of national architecture. These chapels became symbols of their potentiality in [p. 102](#) national self-assertion and independence. Spiritual and social self-improvement went hand in hand in such a way that the Moravian Church became the first nationalist movement among Estonians.

I am sure that many more examples could be told of how the Moravian Church in the 17th century laid the basis for social reform, but here we must stop and put the question: Can the cases related above be considered a fulfilment of the saying of our Lord: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you'?

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## Christian Spirituality

### *An Article Review*

by ROBERT M. YULE

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*In this slightly abridged review article on recent writings of Christian spirituality, the author analyses the 'sanctification gap' of contemporary Protestantism. He encourages fellow evangelicals to recover the best of Catholic spirituality and to experiment in the use of structured patterns of prayer for private or corporate use in order to sustain and enrich the demands of the Christian ministry. These suggestions will rouse suspicion in the minds of many evangelicals, especially those belonging to the Free Church tradition, and more so as the author leads us through the writings of those Roman Catholic, Anglo-Catholic, neo-Orthodox, Liberal and Orthodox Christians who have sought to know and experience God. Few evangelicals have ventured into the paths suggested by many of these writers. For those of settled Biblical conviction this article will prove provocative and perhaps open new vistas for the spiritually barren caught up in the activism of pastoral teaching and administrative ministries.*

Editor.

## I. CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT SPIRITUALITY

THE BEST comprehensive survey of the subject is the three-volume work of the Catholic writer, Louis Bouyer, *A History of Christian Spirituality* (Burns & Oates, 1963–9).<sup>1</sup> Volume I deals with *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*, Volume 2, written in conjunction with Dom Jean Leclercq and P. 104 Dom Francois Vandenbroucke, reviews *The Spirituality of the Middle Ages*, and Volume 3 discusses *Orthodox Spirituality, and Protestant and Anglican Spirituality*. The provocative thesis of the third volume is that Protestantism, though formally separated from the Catholic Church, has always returned to the great tradition of Catholic spirituality when faced with the pastoral need to develop a spirituality of its own; and conversely, that when Protestantism has been strongly anti-Catholic in theological attitude, it has generally shown itself to be incapable of developing an adequate theology of the spiritual life at all.

Allowing for a measure of over-simplification, one has to admit that there is a good deal of truth in Fr. Bouyer's thesis. There are, of course, those striking examples which corroborate his first contention exactly, like those men, from John Henry Newman to Bouyer himself, whose search for a deeper understanding of the spiritual life has led them from Protestantism into the Catholic Church. But the truth of Fr. Bouyer's argument is not limited to such personal instances; it tends to be corroborated by Anglicanism in general, for here we see the deep Catholicity of what English Protestantism has produced in the way of an authentic spirituality. Martin Thornton's *English Spirituality: An Outline of Ascetical Theology according to the English Pastoral Tradition* (S.P.C.K., 1963) is an excellent introduction to Anglican spirituality, tracing its Catholic heritage and development from St. Augustine to the present day. Some of the same ground is also covered by the Catholic historian David Knowles, in *The English Mystical Tradition* (Burns & Oates, 1961). Linking the many different expressions of faith which make up the Anglo-Catholic tradition is an emphasis on personal devotion and spiritual direction within the context of the life and worship of the Church.

These comments are not meant to imply that there is no such thing as a genuine Protestant spirituality outside Anglo-Catholicism. Indeed there is, but it often lacks a living tradition and a coherent expression amid the secularity of the modern world. Protestant writers have produced some excellent books about particular aspects of the

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the place of publication of books referred to is London.

Christian life in today's world—those by Baelz and Ellul are especially good<sup>2</sup>—but there is still, regrettably, p. 105 no comprehensive survey of non-Anglican Protestant spirituality by a Protestant writer, comparable with those of Bouyer and Thornton. This is itself symptomatic of the absence of serious Protestant interest in the subject. A comprehensive survey of Protestant spirituality is desperately needed, but I doubt if it will be forthcoming so long as our theological colleges are not providing courses in the history and practice of Christian spirituality, and so long as a cloud of academic prejudice tends to deter people from the sympathetic study of English Puritanism, continental Pietism, and more recent Revivalism and Evangelicalism. Meanwhile, the reader who is interested to find out more must go directly to specialist studies, of which R. S. Wallace's *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Edinburgh & London, Oliver & Boyd, 1959), E. F. Stoeffler's *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden, Brill, 1965) and A. C. Outler's *John Wesley* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1964) are good examples. My suspicion is that if a history of Protestant spirituality comes to be written, it will tend to support Fr. Bouyer's thesis in relation to non-Anglican Protestantism as well. Certainly, one who reads the great Protestant spiritual writers—especially men like Samuel Rutherford, Richard Baxter, and John Wesley—cannot fail to be impressed by their wide knowledge of the fathers of undivided Christendom and the Catholic mystics of the Middle Ages.

Fr. Bouyer's second contention, on the other hand, finds rather depressing confirmation in the mainstreams of 20th century Protestant thought: theologians as diverse as Harnack and Herrmann, Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann, Aulen and Nygren, Ebeling and Moltmann, are all agreed about one thing—that mysticism (or the possibility of immediate experience of God) is an essentially pagan element in Christianity, which must be rejected at all costs as inconsistent with justification by faith.<sup>3</sup> This lamentable misunderstanding has its source in the anti-mystical stance adopted by the p. 106 old Ritschlian theology. In particular, Albrecht Ritschl's own *Geschichte des Pietismus* (3 vols, 1880–6) has had an enormous influence on subsequent continental theology, predisposing the attitudes of three generations of scholars—even those who (like Barth) had in other respects broken with liberal Protestantism—against a sympathetic understanding of pietist spirituality. In theory, Protestantism will have nothing to do with justification by works; yet, a great deal of modern Protestant thought leaps straight from doctrine to action without the mediation of God's grace acquired through prayer. We

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<sup>2</sup> P. Baelz, *Prayer and Providence* (S.C.M. Press, 1968), J. Ellul, *Prayer and Modern Man* (New York: Seabury, 1970).

<sup>3</sup> Harnack's view that mysticism was a pagan intrusion which accompanied the 'hellenising' of early Christianity colours his entire treatment of Christian spirituality: see *History of Dogma* (London, 1897–9), especially Vol. III, pp. 163–78, Vol. IV, pp. 276–83, Vol. VI, pp. 10–15, 97–108. For the views of the other theologians mentioned, see W. Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God* (London, 1895), pp. 17–46; E. Brunner, *Die Mystik und das Wort* (Tubingen, 1928); R. Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word* (London, 1958), pp. 41f, 111f; G. Aulen, *The Faith of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia, 1948), pp. 50–2; A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (London, 1932–9), especially Pt. I, pp. 158–82, Pt. II, pp. 208–30, 298–300, 355f, 415–19, 430–3, 444–6; G. Ebeling, *Word and Faith* (London, 1963), pp. 32–7; J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London, 1967), pp. 154–65.

Barth's attitude was at first coloured by the views of Harnack and Herrmann, his theological teachers. Thus in his earlier writings he rejected mysticism along with Pietism and Rationalism, as part of the immanentism of modern European culture (*Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1972, pp. 93–100, 113–23, 132–4) and as an intermediate step to modern atheism (*Church Dogmatics*, I.2, pp. 318–25). But in his later writings, when he began to formulate his own understanding of sanctification and the Christian life, his attitude became more discerning and constructive.



suffer, in the words of another writer, from a 'sanctification gap'<sup>4</sup>—a gap between faith and works, theology and ethics, resulting from a lack of clear pastoral instruction on how to bring the whole of one's life in the world into progressive conformity with the will of God.

The sanctification gap is now manifesting itself in the fragmentation of contemporary Protestantism. Twentieth century Protestant theology has tended to become intellectualistic, an exercise for academics. As a result, theology, thus discredited, is rejected altogether in favour of secular activism. And now, in the radicalising of secular Christianity, we are witnessing the emergence of a new Pelagianism, a political activism which is unregulated by any belief in God whatever. The next step, which some with due consistency are already taking, is to baptise this activism in the waters of a current ideology which is not Christian at all. It is Marx, not the Beatles, who is now more popular than Jesus Christ. p. 107

## II. THE REDISCOVERY OF COMMUNITY

The charismatic movement is perhaps a sign that the Holy Spirit is doing something to fill the sanctification gap. The movement has not yet produced any major writings on Christian spirituality. But it is leading people to a new dimension of meaning in personal prayer, and to an exciting discovery of authentic Christian community in the context of the local church. The experience of the members of the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Houston, Texas, is characteristic of what is happening in many places. Michael Harper, in *A New Way of Living* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1973), gives a rather journalistic account of this church's phoenix-like rebirth from the ashes of Episcopalian ritualism and inner-city stagnation into a community of costly apostolic sharing and joyful worship. And Graham Pulkingham's book *Gathered for Power* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1973) is a simple yet moving account of his own pilgrimage from the suffering and despair of a failed activist to become the Spirit-filled pastor through whose ministry much of this church's rejuvenation was made possible. The note of humiliation and weakness, not always present in critical assessments of the charismatic movement, should not be overlooked; the power of God was disclosed to Pulkingham in the earthenware pot of acknowledged spiritual bankruptcy.

I think it is significant that some of the best books on Christian spirituality to have come out of 20th century Protestantism were originally written in the context of community life and addressed to Christians living in community. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship* (complete edition, S.C.M. Press, 1959) and *Life Together* (S.C.M. Press, 1954) were both written between 1935 and 1939, when Bonhoeffer was head of the illegal seminary of the 'Confessing Church' at Finkenwalde, in Nazi Germany. We should remember that community living was a form of theological education without precedent in modern German Protestantism: these books were addressed to the exigencies of a new pastoral situation. Similarly, the growth of the Taizé Community since the Second World War has introduced a new dimension of Christian experience into the life of the Protestant Churches in France. The writings of Roger Schutz, the community's founder-prior, contain much that is of value. The best known and most readily obtainable p. 108 is *This Day Belongs to God* (Faith Press, 1961). Schutz's colleague, Max Thurian, sub-prior of the community, is known mainly for his writings on the theology of worship, but people who are hard pressed will find his book *Modern Man and Spiritual Life* (Lutterworth, 1963) a helpful introduction to the discipline of prayer. *The Rule of Taizé* (Les

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Richard Levelace's article, 'The Sanctification Gap', *Theology Today*, XXIX, (4 January 1973), pp. 363–9.

Presses de Taizé) is also worth perusing: it breathes the robust, matter-of-fact spirituality that has made this community such a force in the renewal of continental Protestantism and ecumenical endeavour.

### III. ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

Perhaps the greatest contribution to the enrichment of our understanding of Christian spirituality in the 20th century has come from the Eastern Orthodox Church. In particular, the members of the Russian Orthodox emigration have done a great deal to communicate the riches of Orthodox spirituality to Western Christians since the Revolution of 1917. The Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, founded in 1927 and linking the Anglican and Orthodox Churches, has been both an expression and a vehicle of this interaction between East and West; its twice-yearly journal *Sobornost* contains many worthwhile articles on theology and spirituality, usually of a very practical nature. I have no doubt that if clergy were to subscribe to it and ponder its articles, they would find not only much food for personal reflection but the inspiration for many sermons as well.

Eastern Orthodoxy has an unbroken spiritual tradition stretching back through the Byzantine mystics to the desert Fathers and the New Testament. Many of the most widely used spiritual and ascetic writings from this tradition were brought together into a single collection, known as the *Philokalia*, at the end of the 18th century, for the use of monks on Mt. Athos, the historic centre of Orthodox monasticism. Selections from the Russian version of this work have recently been translated and published in the West by E. Kadloubovsky and G. E. H. Palmer, in two self-contained volumes, *Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart* (Faber, 1951), and *Early Fathers from the Philokalia* (Faber, 1954). Another recently translated work also draws on this great heritage of Orthodox spiritual writing—*The Art of Prayer: An Orthodox p. 109 Anthology*, compiled by Igumen Chariton of the monastery at Valamo in Finland (Faber, 1966). It is one of the best books I know on prayer. All these writers emphasise the need to acquire a continual recollection of the presence of God, even in the midst of other activity, by means of the practice of interior prayer of the heart. It is recommended as a way of life for all people, not just a spiritual elite: the anonymous author of *The Way of a Pilgrim* (S.P.C.K., 1972) was an unlettered Russian peasant in the 19th century who strove, by following the teachings of the *Philokalia*, to put into practice St. Paul's injunction to 'pray without ceasing'. This book and its sequel, *The Pilgrim Continues his Way* (S.P.C.K., 1973), are rather reminiscent of the *Fioretti* of St. Francis; they show the disarmingly simple, if somewhat idiosyncratic, attempts of one man to live the hard sayings of the Gospel.

The members of the Russian emigration have not been mere traditionalists, content just to translate works of Orthodox spirituality; they have often been really able spiritual advisers in their own right. Best known and best loved is undoubtedly the Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church in Britain, Archbishop Anthony Bloom. His book *School for Prayer* (Darren, Longman & Todd, 1970) has had an astonishingly wide readership, as can be seen from the number of reprintings it has gone through already. Its special merit is the way in which it relates prayer and suffering, and it is written with that same spiritual intensity and insight that those who have met the author personally will have experienced. The content of some of Bloom's other books tends to overlap: I would recommend *Living Prayer* (Darren, Longman & Todd, 1966) and *God and Man* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971) as being not only the best but also the least repetitive of these. Bloom's teacher in Paris was the great Russian Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky, whose book *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (James Clarke, 1957) is not only a superb work of theology and an excellent introduction to Orthodox thought, but a model

of how theology and spirituality should be integrally related in Christian experience. There is no sanctification gap here. A contrast with the West is that Orthodox spirituality does not suffer from the rather morbid quality that has sometimes characterized Catholic and Puritan devotion: it is full of the joy of the risen Lord. A recent book which exemplifies this is *The Joy of Freedom: Eastern p. 110 Worship and Modern Man* (Lutterworth, 1967), by the Indian Orthodox theologian Paul Verghese.

#### IV. RESOURCES FOR MINISTRY

The ministry is a demanding occupation; it requires deep spiritual resources to sustain and enrich it. Such resources can only be acquired through prayer, yet there is today probably no part of a minister's life that is less cultivated for want of practical guidance or more quickly abandoned for lack of time than this. How can we sustain a regular discipline of prayer, so that our ministry might be a genuine work of God and not just a feverish round of well-intentioned but rather fruitless activity? Most clergy find this a problem, whatever Church they belong to. However, I think the difficulty is aggravated for ministers in the Presbyterian and Free Church traditions by the attitudes of suspicion or even hostility that have come to surround the use of prepared forms as an aid to personal or corporate prayer<sup>5</sup>. As a result, many ministers struggle fitfully to make free prayer regular and meaningful; others, finding this too onerous and unrewarding, give up praying altogether (some, in the long run, give up the ministry as well).

Ministers who are dissatisfied with the barren or spasmodic nature of their personal prayer, or who desire an aid to perseverance in periods of spiritual aridity, would be greatly helped, I believe, by using a more structured pattern of prayer, like one of the various contemporary versions of the daily office that are now available. There is a good deal to be said for using the office. It gives the direction and purpose, variety and balance, which is so often lacking in unstructured prayer. It introduces an element of objective praise into personal prayer; it provides a substratum of prayer for each day's activity in the world, thus helping to sanctify the day in reality, not just in imagination; and it links all who use it with the prayer of the Church in a real, though hidden, community of p. 111 worship. The Taizé Community led the way in revising the traditional daily office for modern use, and in re-establishing it as an acceptable form of prayer in the Reformed tradition. The fruit of its research is available in *The Taizé Office* (Faith Press, 1966). More recently the Joint Liturgical Group in Britain, comprising representatives of the Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational, and Methodist Churches, has published a book entitled *The Daily Office*, edited by R. C. D. Jasper (S.P.C.K. & Epworth, 1968). It is more austere than the Taizé form, though it is also more simple to use. This volume includes an excellent introductory essay on the nature of the office and its place in the life of the Church, written by Stephen Winward, better known for his work with Scripture Union and his book on prayer in the 'Teach Yourself' series. The Joint Liturgical Group's Lectionary covers the whole of the New Testament once a year and nearly all of the Old Testament once every two years; there are three readings each day, two in the morning and one in the evening. For use as a second evening lesson or meditation, an interesting collection of spiritual readings has been prepared by Christopher Campling, drawn mainly

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<sup>5</sup> In the case of Presbyterians this suspicion is not historically justified. For nearly a century after the Reformation daily morning and evening prayer continued to be held in most Scottish churches, using Knox's *Book of Common Order*, until the abandonment of this Prayer Book by the Westminster Assembly led to the cessation of daily services.

from contemporary Christian writers. It has recently been published in two volumes as *The Fourth Lesson in the Daily Office* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973f).

The idea of a collection of extra-Biblical spiritual readings for daily reflection is a good one, but Campling's selection, in my opinion, suffers from being too exclusively contemporary. It lacks the historical balance and richness of the magnificent new edition of the Roman Breviary which has been prepared under the authorisation of the Second Vatican Council for the use of all Catholic clergy. Entitled *The Divine Office: The Liturgy of the Hours according to the Roman Rite* (London, Sydney & Dublin: Collins, Dwyer & Talbot, 1974, £11.50 each), its three sumptuous volumes, totalling over six thousand pages, make our efforts in liturgical revision look almost dilettante in comparison. No new Protestant reform of worship will be able to ignore it. It is full of spiritual riches; a judicious blend of Scripture, psalms, prayer, hymns, poetry, and readings from the great patristic and medieval spiritual writers of the Church, all skilfully woven into the texture of the Christian year.

Finally, I shall say something about three books which I have [p. 112](#) found very helpful in relation to particular aspects of the ministry. On the task and opportunity of Christian preaching, I know nothing better than Karl Barth's little volume *Prayer and Preaching*, with an introduction by James Stewart (S.C.M. Press, 1964). For depth of genuinely spiritual pastoral insight—as distinct from pastoral insights which are just an amalgam of perspective derived from other professions—*The Diary of a Russian Priest*, by Alexander Elchaninov (Faber, 1967) is unsurpassed. Elchaninov was a parish priest of the Russian Orthodox Church in France in the years between the two world wars; he writes with a penetrating simplicity that is the distinctive fruit of a lifetime of prayer and close observation of people. For clergy who overwork, or are in other ways prone to lose a sense of proportion in their ministry, there is a lot of shrewd as well as sanctified common sense in Charles Spurgeon's *Lectures to My Students* (1889), selections from which have recently been republished by Helmut Thielicke in his book *Encounter with Spurgeon* (James Clarke, 1964). 'A mouthful of sea air,' Spurgeon writes, 'or a stiff walk in the wind's face, would not give grace to the soul, but it would yield oxygen to the body, which is next best.'

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## Johann Georg Hamann on Bible and Revelation

by HELGO LINDNER

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ANYONE who undertakes to examine thoroughly the problems of the historico-critical approach to the Bible will have to direct his attention time and again to that period in which the 'historical' and 'critical' work achieved a breakthrough at our universities. The

Ago of Enlightenment did not merely bring far-reaching changes for the general history of ideas. For the Bible-question in particular it brought the swing from the orthodoxy of traditional Protestantism to the historical approach in contemporary theology,<sup>1</sup> with which we are still struggling today.

## I. A STATEMENT OF HAMANN'S ON THE LINGUISTIC QUALITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A short work by Hamann,<sup>2</sup> dated 1759, deserves our special attention here: It is the first of three letters ('Clover leaf of Hellenistic letters'—*Kleeblatt hellenistischer Briefe*) which Hamann published in 1762 together with other earlier works of his,<sup>3</sup> under the title **P. 114** 'Crusades of the Philologist' (*Kreuzzuge des Philologen*).<sup>4</sup> The occasion for this particular piece of writing was an academic dispute on the quality of New Testament Greek. In 1755, the Orientalist and Graecist G.D. Kypke had published a treatise (*Observationes sacrae*), in which he had subjected the New Testament to a stylistic comparison with classical Greek authors. In doing, so, he had come to the conclusion that the NT authors did not come up to the standard of Attic prose. The reply of another scholar from the University of Königsberg, about which we have no further information,<sup>5</sup> must have been the direct motivation for Hamann's statement. Here is the train of Hamann's thought: A book that brings only a compilation of excerpts from profane authors does not deserve the title 'Sacred Observations', because it fails to recognise the singularity of the Bible. In order to evaluate the 'style of the New Testament', one needs not only detailed philological knowledge ('what is good Greek'), but also basic ('philosophical') insights into the nature of language, which are not as yet available. What is to be noted is this: Language cannot be judged separately from the person who is speaking (writing) and his life-situation (place, time, etc.). The style of the Gospels, for example, confirms unequivocally<sup>6</sup> what we know of their authors, namely that they were in the first place Jews under Roman rule and secondly no scholars. The Greek of Matthew the tax-collector *cannot* look like that of a Xenophon. Anyway, the life and thought of the Christians presented something quite new in relation to the environment of their time (to the world as it then was), and whoever lived differently, necessarily also spoke differently. Thus 'the way of the Christians' had to receive 'a new language and a holy style in order to distinguish it (from other ways)', and

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<sup>1</sup> G. Hornig gave his book on Job. Sal. Semler (Göttingen, 1961) the title *The beginnings of historico-critical theology*. Semler's major work on the 'free examination of the Canon' was published in 1771–1775 (4 volumes).

<sup>2</sup> Born 1730 at Königsberg. Converted 1758 in London through the reading of the Bible. Back in Königsberg he earned his living as administrator of a warehouse. He was familiar with J. Kant, the great philosopher of his home town, but was his first and most profound critic. He died in 1788 at Pempelfort near Münster.

<sup>3</sup> Among them is the programme of the movement of 'Storm and Stress': *Aesthetica in nuce* (1762) (J.G. Herder, J.W. Goethe).

<sup>4</sup> In Nadler's edition, Vol. II. The first Hellenistic Letter is to be found there on pp. 169–73. It is also printed in full in M. Seil's selection *Entkleidung und Verklärung* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 261–69. The commentary on Hamann's major works by F. Blanke and K. Grunder refers to the Letter in Vol. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Fritz Blanke, *Hamann-Studien* (Zürich, 1956), p. 88.

<sup>6</sup> '... is the most authentic evidence of...' Nadler II, p. 170; Seils, p. 262.



right up to the present time the special language of the Christians<sup>7</sup> is a proof of their P. 115 Hebrew origin. 'The Oriental colouring of our pulpit style leads us back to the cradle of our race and our religion.'<sup>8</sup>

The human characteristic of NT language—with its Hebraisms and grammatical irregularities—also confirms the Spirit of God that stands behind the books of the New Testament as their originator. The inspiration of the NT is in accordance with God's emptying himself in his Son and with his 'humility' (*Demuth*) in the work of creation. 'It belongs to the unity of the divine revelation that the Spirit of God humble, himself and empties himself of his majesty through the stylus held by the human hands of godly men driven by him, just as much as the Son humbles himself in the form of a servant, and as the whole creation is a work of deepest humility.'<sup>9</sup> The 'divine style' chose 'the stupid, the insipid, the base' (cf. [I Corinthians 1:27](#)!). Accordingly, there is a need on the part of the reader of Holy Scripture for 'enthusiasm', for loving intimacy which is capable of 'recognising the rays of heavenly glory in such disguise'.<sup>10</sup> The contestable literary form of the divine records is in accordance with the weakness and frailty of the apostle ([II Corinthians 4:7](#)). Going by the criteria of rhetoric, NT prose, together with, e.g. the newspaper and letter style, belongs to the 'lower manner of speech' (*humile genus dicendi*). In this lowliness they are like the 'colt, whereon yet never man sat, the foal of an ass', upon which the Lord rode into Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup> The inclusion of elements taken over from the Hellenistic world also fits into this context: Paul takes heathen themes 'captive to obey Christ'. Conclusion: The 'holy style' of the New Testament, the '*stylus curiae* of the Kingdom of Heaven' can only be recognised by the reader who is intimately acquainted with and enraptured by the humility of God. p. 116

## II. ON THE INTERPRETATION OF HAMANN'S PUBLICATION

In his inaugural address in Zurich (1929),<sup>12</sup> church historian Fritz Blanke drew attention to the amazing modernity of Hamann's comparison of NT Greek with the newspaper and letter style as the 'lowest class of Greek style'. 'Hamann adds<sup>13</sup> that only a little of this newspaper Greek has been preserved; but this complaint is no longer fitting today, as you know. Papyrus findings have made us acquainted with the most everyday form of the

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<sup>7</sup> E.g. 'language of Canaan', but not in a derogatory sense. Cf. Hamann's linguistic usage in the *Aesthetica* (Nadler II, p. 197; Seils, p. 262). The expression 'language of Canaan' comes from [Isaiah 19:18](#).

<sup>8</sup> Nadler II, p. 170; Seils, p. 263. As far as the 'oriental' character of the Bible is concerned, we can note that August Hermann Franke had already founded a *collegium orientale theologiae* in Halle in 1702, and it was this *collegium* that organised the first critical edition of the Hebrew Bible (E. Beyreuther: *Der Geschichtliche Auftrag des Pietismus in der Gegenwart*, Calwer Hefte 66, 1963, p. 15).

<sup>9</sup> At this point Hamann's formulation takes up [II Peter 1:21](#): 'Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke forth God' (Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, pp. 263ff.).

<sup>10</sup> Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 264.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. [Mark 11:2](#); [Luke 19:30](#); also [Matthew 21:5](#).

<sup>12</sup> *Gottessprache und Menschengesprache bei J.G. Hamann* (Theol. Blätter, 1930), in Blanke's *Hamann-Studien* (Zurich, 1956), pp. 83–97.

<sup>13</sup> Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 265.

Greek language, and the similarity of this papyrus Greek to the New Testament provides a splendid testimony to the foresight of the master'.<sup>14</sup>

So here we have first of all Hamann's appreciation of history which, passed on by Herder, set much in motion in the period that followed. The language of the Biblical authors is the language of an epoch far removed from our own. It cannot be 'comprehended from books alone'.<sup>15</sup> By observing the living language we can obtain a better understanding of the changes in language that occurred in the past. 'French in our time is as cosmopolitan as Greek was in its time. What else are we to expect, other than that the former must degenerate in London and Berlin, just as Greek may have been corrupted in Jewish terrain—especially in Galilee.... The migrations of living languages shed sufficient light for us on the characteristics they share with the dead languages, and indeed on the shifting pattern of all languages.'<sup>16</sup>

Is that 'mere' philology or history? Not with Hamann. The first 'Hellenistic letter' begins and ends with the desire to say something about 'the Holy' in the style of the New Testament,<sup>17</sup> and in its centre is the sentence about the Spirit of God humbling himself through 'the human stylus of holy men, who were driven p. 117 by him'.<sup>18</sup> The basic concern of the pamphlet must be seen as a theological one. The focal point is the mystery of the Bible.

Hamann contradicts the orthodox doctrine of Scripture, which deduced from the verbal inspiration of the Bible not only its freedom from factual mistakes, but also its linguistic perfection.<sup>19</sup> In spite of that, he does keep to the doctrine of inspiration, and it is one that retains the text of the Biblical writings as being given by the Spirit of God. But this doctrine receives a new element through the thought of humbling or emptying. The Spirit of God 'humbled and emptied' himself in the work of the Biblical authors. This is why the Scriptures have as their style the *humile genus dicendi*—and this is indeed in strict accordance with the way of God in the humbling of his Son; this is why, in the purpose of God, we do not find in the New Testament the pure Greek of classical authors, but a language marked by Hebraisms, which causes some offence to the Graecist. The style of the New Testament is genuine, 'in a certain sense original',<sup>20</sup> not just in the sense that it

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<sup>14</sup> Blanke p. 88. 'Magus from the north' was a name given to Hamann by F.K. Moser (1723–1798) referring to [Matthew 2:2](#).

<sup>15</sup> Nadler II, p. 170; Seils, p. 262.

<sup>16</sup> Nadler II, p. 172; Seils, pp. 265f.

<sup>17</sup> In the closing section of his work and with an irony directed against himself, Hamann calls his own exposition, probably in conscious contrast to the Biblical writings, 'godless scrawl' (Nadler II, p. 173; Seils, p. 267).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. above: [p. 114](#) and note 9.

<sup>19</sup> 'So it would be sacrilege to maintain that there were offences against the correct use of words and against syntax in any part of the holy book.' Thus Joh. Fr. König, the Lutheran dogmatist, whose writings are now easily accessible through C.H. Ratschow, *Lutherische Dogmatik zwischen Reformation and Aufklärung* (Vol. I, 1964, pp. 77 and 79).

Hamann writes in contrast (Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 264): '*DEI Dialectus, Soloecismus*,' says a well-known expositor. This also applies here: *Vox populi, vox DEI*.. 'By the 'well-known expositor' he could mean John Lightfoot, the Hebraist and Talmudist, cf. J.A. Bengel's *Gnomon* on [Revelation 11:15](#). The dispute about the *soloikismos* in the NT apparently has its roots in the 3rd century A.D. in the works of Origen's pupil Dionysius Alexandrinus.

<sup>20</sup> Nadler II, p. 172; Seils, p. 265.

confirms the life-situation of its authors, but above all in its testimony to the God who stoops down to mankind.<sup>21</sup>

Here lies the heart and soul of all Hamann's thinking. Revelation is a unity. Christology and pneumatology, and even the doctrine of creation, are all understood from the perspective of God humbling himself: '.. just as the whole creation is an act of deepest humility'.<sup>22</sup> Against the natural religion of the deists, who see in nature a 'higher being', but do not find the Father of Jesus p. 118 Christ there, Hamann holds up the God who in every inch of revelation speaks one and the same language.<sup>23</sup> Hamann's 'significance for the history of theology', as Helmuth Schreiner has put it, lies 'in the fact that he took the condescension of God seriously in the first and third articles (of the apostolic creed), as well as in the second.'<sup>24</sup>

At this point in the train of thought of the first Hellenistic Letter the immediate theme (the style of the New Testament) is split up to allow a wider context to dominate (unity of revelation in the whole of reality). This will need to be evaluated as an indication that a basic concern of Hamann's comes to light here.<sup>25</sup> The sentence on the 'unity of divine revelation' not only points back to the works he wrote during his stay in London, and which testify to the great change in his life,<sup>26</sup> but equally points forward to his total 'authorship' right up to the 'last page'.<sup>27</sup> It is always the same theme: God's 'lowering himself', his 'humility', his 'humbling himself', which the author from Königsberg is never tired of tracing.

### III. INSPIRATION AND HUMANNESS OF THE SCRIPTURES

Hamann introduced the thought of condescension in particular into the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture, and this reveals p. 119 a form of the doctrine of Scripture which does not bring the humanness of the Biblical writings, their historical restrictedness and manifold confutability into conflict with their being the work of the Spirit. The Spirit of God 'chooses', not a classical writer such as Xenophon, but the tax-collector Matthew in order to write down the history of Jesus; and he does this on purpose, not as a

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<sup>21</sup> '... the *stylus curiae* of the Kingdom of heaven remains, I believe, especially in comparison with Asian courts, the most gentle and the most humble ...' (Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 264).

<sup>22</sup> Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 264.

<sup>23</sup> 'Merely to admire the only wise God in nature is perhaps an insult similar to the affront one causes a judicious man, whose value the mob judge p. according to his coat' (Nadler II, p. 171; Seils, p. 264).

<sup>24</sup> H Schreiner, *Die Menschwerdung Gottes in der Theologie Joh. Georg Hamanns*, second edition (Tübingen, 1950), p. 52. P. 55: 'The heart that beats for us in Christ reveals to us the heart of the Creator. And this heart desires communication. And that is why it draws us to itself. And that is why God comes to us. In the concept of God lowering Himself, the whole Biblical message of God's coming is in Hamann gathered together, like the light in a lens.'

<sup>25</sup> Besides the books by Blanke and Schreiner already mentioned, I would like to draw special attention here to Martin Seils' *Wirklichkeit und Wort bei Joh. Georg Hamann* (Stuttgart, 1961).

<sup>26</sup> These are the fragments of the year 1758 (especially the *Biblische Betrachtungen*), which Nadler published in the first volume of his edition under the title (which was originally used by Hamann) *Tagebuch eines Christen*, and the *Gedanken über meinen Lebenslauf*, (Nadler II, pp. 9–54). 'Since the *Tagebuch eines Christen*, his basic convictions stand firm' (M. Seils, *Theologische Aspekte zur gegenwertigen Hamann-Deutung* (Göttingen, 1957), p. 106. The latest work on Hamann's Bible experience in London is Harry Sievers, *Joh. Georg Hamanns Bekehrung* (Zürich, 1969).

<sup>27</sup> Nadler III, p. 410; cf. M. Seils, *Theologische Aspekte*, pp. 12ff.

compromise. This is what God is like! But who can understand him? With words that are intentionally reminiscent of Paul,<sup>28</sup> Hamann formulates his proposition, that can be called ‘pneumatic’, but then in the sense of condescension: ‘So if the divine style chooses the stupid, the insipid, the base to put the strength and ingenuity<sup>29</sup> of all profane writers to shame, then it is also true of course that it takes the eyes of a friend, enlightened, enthusiastic, and armed with jealousy, the eyes of an intimate, a lover, to recognise the rays of heavenly glory in such disguise’.<sup>30</sup> But it is here, in the lowly words and letters themselves, and not past them that ‘the rays of heavenly glory’ are given to us and we can grasp them. Glory and lowliness are inseparably bound together in the Scriptures. The sovereign God wanted this Bible, and did not merely ‘allow’ it<sup>31</sup>—this is how we may understand Hamann. God is its actual author, its ‘writer’,<sup>32</sup> its ‘chronicler’.<sup>33</sup> And this is evident in everything right down to the style, which Hamann calls ‘divine style’, ‘*stylus curiae*’ P. 120 of the Kingdom of Heaven’.<sup>34</sup> It is not surprising that his rationalist contemporaries became scorers of the Bible. To one of his friends (J.G. Lindner) he cries out: ‘Leave me my pride in the old rags. These old rags saved me from the pit, and I boast of them as Joseph boasted of his coat of many colours’.<sup>35</sup>

#### IV. ACCOMMODATION AND CONDESCENSION

The significance (meaning) of Hamann’s doctrine of Scripture stands out if we compare its basic thought of condescension with another similar thought which at that time was also—and indeed much more often—brought into the discussion about the Bible, and

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<sup>28</sup> See above: [p. 114](#).

<sup>29</sup> The loan word, which can mean ‘candour, openness’, also ‘naivete’, is difficult to interpret in this context. Logically we would expect the ‘pride’ or the ‘self-confidence’ of the profane writers to be humbled. Perhaps: ‘naive self-assessment’.

<sup>30</sup> See above: [p. 114](#). Immediately afterwards comes the sentence on solecism quoted in footnote 19.

<sup>31</sup> In the sense of the Hamann interpretation given here, A. Schlatter *Das christliche Dogma*, (Stuttgart, 1911, pp. 410f) also excludes from the doctrine of Scripture the concept of God ‘allowing’ the Bible to be as it is: ‘... human weakness also serves the rule of God and His glorification. One can only speak of God “allowing” in reference to evil; if on the other hand this formula is extended to include weakness and error, then the will of grace is thereby darkened. The human (in abstract sense) is for God not just the patiently borne burden, not just the obstructing barrier which is for the time being allowed to remain; no, man is rather valued by God, intended and loved by Him, with all his weakness ...’

<sup>32</sup> Nadler I, p. 5 (Seils, p. 24), p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Nadler I, p. 91 (Seils, p. 13).

<sup>34</sup> See above: footnote 21. Behind the talk of the *Stylus curiae* is probably J.A. Bengel’s expression ‘heavenly office-style’ (E. Ludwig, *Schriftverständnis und Schriftauslegung bei J.A. Bengel* (Stuttgart, 1952), p. 30. Bengel, *Gnomon*, third edition (1773), *Praefatio* XIV, praises the Biblical style, which in an incomparable fashion combines *profunditas* (depth) and *facilitas* (simplicity), and then continues: ‘Omnes mundanas in style curiae elegantins longissime superat sermo divinus. Deus, non ut homo, sed ut Deus, verba facit, se ipso digna.’

<sup>35</sup> W. Ziesemer—A. Henkel, *Hamann-Briefwechsel*, Vol. I, p. 341 (Seils, p. 100). The comparison borrowed from [Jeremiah 38](#) continued to have its effect later on with M. Kahler and his pupils, cf. M. Seils, *Wirklichkeit und Wort*, p. 11. Already in 1758 Hamann wrote: ‘We are all lying in a boggy prison just as Jeremiah did. Old rags served as ropes with which to pull him out; it is due to them that he was saved. It was not their appearance, but the services they did for him, and the use he made of these, that saved him from the danger his life was in’ (Nadler I, p. 5: Seils, p. 24).

which prompted a mass of literary productions in the 70s and 80s of the century of Enlightenment<sup>36</sup>—all the more so as the orthodox doctrine of Scripture had recently become untenable. It is the thought of ‘accommodation’, according to which the Biblical authors ‘adapted’ or ‘accommodated’ themselves to their readers’ level of understanding. The idea of accommodation has a long history<sup>37</sup> that goes right back as far as the apologists of the early Church, and beyond to Philo of Alexandria and even to Plato. Among its proponents in more modern times are, for example, Kepler and Galilei with their attempt to understand and make [P. 121](#) understandable<sup>38</sup> the discrepancies that stem from the Biblical world-view; then Spinoza,<sup>39</sup> and further the Lutheran dogmatists, who wanted to bring the unity of the Holy Spirit as author of the Scriptures into harmony with the individual style of the different human authors.<sup>40</sup> In the rationalism that was then becoming popular (e.g. Baumgarten, 1706–1757) the concept of accommodation was used to mediate between the Bible (figurative way of speaking’) and an enlightened worldview.<sup>41</sup> Joh. Salomo Semler became the chief proponent of the *accommodatio*. He abandoned the doctrine of verbal inspiration,<sup>42</sup> thus making the way clear to bring the Bible into harmony with the insights of reason, even to the extent of ignoring its actual wording. At the time of the apostles, Semler thinks, the people were not capable of combining the truth of a matter with the ideas appropriate to that truth. This is why Paul, for example, practised *accommodatio*; that means, according to Semler’s definition, the ‘lowering of oneself to tolerate untrue ideas held by incompetent Christians’.<sup>43</sup> This lowering of oneself becomes superfluous though with people who have a higher standard of education; one can then—and Semler is thinking of the Pauline expression in [1 Corinthians 3](#)—speak with them ‘spiritually’, and does not need to speak with them any more as ‘men of the flesh’, i.e. one can do without the ‘illustrations that appeal to the senses’ and the ‘low ideas’.<sup>44</sup> What Semler accomplishes under the cover of the theory of accommodation is no longer simply an explanation of the Biblical concepts of nature,<sup>45</sup> but is a thorough-going theological criticism of Biblical content in general. It is a ‘de-mythologisation’<sup>46</sup> which—long before Rudolf [P. 122](#) Bultmann—abandons hell, devil and

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<sup>36</sup> See Hornig’s book on Semler, p. 211. Fritz Blanke taught us to see the difference between Hamann’s understanding of condescension and the rationalistic application of the concept of accommodation (*op cit.*, pp. 34f.).

<sup>37</sup> It has not yet been written. References to it in F. Blanke, pp. 84f; G. Hornig, pp. 211–36; W. Schmittner, *Kritik und Apologetik in der Theologie J.S. Semlers* (Munich, 1963), pp. 41–46.

<sup>38</sup> Joshua commands the sun to stand still ([Joshua 10:12](#)). According to Galilei, the Biblical authors speak like this ‘in order to adapt themselves to the level of understanding of the people’. K. Scholder, *Ursprünge und Probleme der Bibelkritik im 17. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1966), p. 73.

<sup>39</sup> Schmittner (see footnote 37), pp. 41 f.

<sup>40</sup> Here—for example in Quenstedt’s works—the Holy Spirit is the subject of the *accommodari*, not the man writing. Cf. Hornig, p. 214.

<sup>41</sup> G. Hornig, p. 218.

<sup>42</sup> G. Hornig, pp. 65ff; W. Schmittner, pp. 15, 27.

<sup>43</sup> Hornig, p. 224.

<sup>44</sup> W. Schmittner, pp. 42f.

<sup>45</sup> As it still is with Baumgartner, Hornig, p. 216.

<sup>46</sup> As Hornig writes, p. 225.



demons, reduces sin to a mere experience in the inner life of man, dismisses apocalyptic and the return of Jesus as Jewish pre-Christian elements, and, with reference to the Gospel of John, supports an eschatology of the *parousia*.<sup>47</sup>

Hamann cannot include this kind of understanding of accommodation in his doctrine of Scripture, nor can he make use of the rationality or morality of an 'enlightened person', whoever he may be, as a foundation for a criticism of Biblical content.<sup>48</sup> For him, the time-bound form of Biblical utterance is not something figurative, a foreground behind which the real thing needs to be made accessible through interpretation; for him the lowliness of Scripture is not a concession to the lower standard of education of past generations, but it is rather God's own manner of speaking, and fully his intention. But intention is not the same thing as allowing something to be as it is, and this is where Hamann's understanding of *condescension* departs completely from all theories of accommodation.<sup>49</sup>

The rationalist stumbles at the written letter's weakness and on the strength of his reason goes behind it in order to obtain 'more'. Hamann thinks in the opposite direction: God has not entrusted us with too little in the written letter, but with so much that we never cease to be amazed at its wealth. The Scriptures give us riches in the form in which we have them. Whoever says 'Yes' to the lowly form will experience the abundance it holds. p. 123

## V. BETWEEN THE TWO BOOK COVERS

The Bible is for Hamann 'God's book': God reveals his very heart to man, and chooses of all things the book-form to do so, a piece of literature, with all the regulations and limitations inherent in this form of communication. Although his nearness to the old Protestant understanding of Scripture (God as *auctor principalis*!) becomes evident here, Hamann is by no means a renewer of orthodoxy, with his theological explanation for the humanness of Scripture, and with his full and enthusiastic acceptance of this humanness; he rather points forward to the more recent Biblical research that takes its cue from history. Hamann has no doctrine of the 'infallibility of Scripture', which is all the more amazing because his understanding of inspiration must be regarded entirely in the sense of verbal inspiration. Whoever wants to experience the gift of the Spirit in Scripture cannot emancipate himself from its wording. The Scriptures in the form in which we have them are for Hamann a mystery which cannot be solved rationally.<sup>50</sup> We have here a doctrine of verbal inspiration which is motivated, not by an asserted perfection of the

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<sup>47</sup> At the same time Semler adheres to the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus, and is personally interested in a 'mystical' relationship with God (Hornig, pp. 225–36).

<sup>48</sup> We possess no detailed statement of Hamann's on any of Semler's writings. But we do know from letters (Ziesemer-Henkel III, p. 79 and IV, p. 311) that Hamann knew the treatise on the Canon and rejected it resolutely. 'One can certainly always learn from him, but I have never felt any inclination to rely upon him.' 'The only thing I have read that the honest man has written is his Canon, which made me bitter and angry against his raw and undigested book knowledge.'

<sup>49</sup> Within the history of their development, *accommodation* and *condescension* can be used for one and the same term, and have the same meaning, as in the works of Hilarius and Augustine—cf. Blanke, p. 85. Hamann's use of the word 'Heruhterlassung' ('lowering of oneself') is therefore understood by Blanke as giving the term a new meaning: 'This lowering is an emptying, but a real one, not just an assumed emptying.'

<sup>50</sup> Wherever one hermeneutically or systematically sets off the terms 'Scripture', 'Word of God', 'letters' and 'Spirit' against each other, it is justifiable to ask whether the Scriptures are then still understood theologically in the actual sense of the word.

Bible, but by praise of the sublime God who goes the very way of humility in order to extend his Kingdom and to win men to himself.

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# A Critical Evaluation of Theological Education in Residential Training

by ANIL D. SOLANKY

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THIS PAPER is not dealing with new methodology or innovations in teaching. I want to give attention to something far more basic: 'What Is Learning?' You will all agree that unless learning takes place, there is no teaching.

According to the Hebrew concept, learning did not mean merely coming to know a body of facts. The Hebrew concept, *daa'th*, means knowledge which is experienced. Knowledge of God, (*daa'th Elohim*) is not merely having information about God. It implies entering into an intimate personal relationship with him. Also the verb *yada'* (to know) is used in a very personal way: Adam knew Eve. So knowledge here is to enter into relationship, into experience. Knowledge must mean experience, competence, and ability to use acquired skills.

Our traditional view of learning is content-oriented. Students are expected to master content or information and then reproduce it in examinations. This may sound like a caricature but as far as my experience is concerned, I have found this true in most of the theological colleges and their courses. Recently I met a teacher coming out of a class toward the end of the term, who exclaimed, 'My! I wish I had another month to cover all that!' So content is the problem of the teacher as well as the problem of an average student. As someone has said, enthusiastic teachers and committed students are at the mercy of a poor concept of teaching and learning. Peter Savage points out that this concept of education—that knowledge is a body of information is based on a Greek view. It is alien to the Biblical understanding of knowledge. p. 125

## WEAKNESSES IN CONTENT APPROACH

### 1. Too much content to master

One obvious weakness of the content approach is the impossibility of mastering even an infinitesimal part of today's knowledge. The great explosion of knowledge in the second half of the 20th century makes the meaningful coverage of content impossible. So what is learning? Some define it as behavioural development or change in a student as distinct

from mere growth in age. To put it in simple words, it is development and ability to do certain activities.

As you may be aware, there are radical educationalists like Ivan Illich who speak of 'de-schooling society'. Some theological educators want to do away with traditional residential schooling. But there are still those who will die to maintain the *status quo* even though it dehumanises the person who passes through the process. I take a mediating position. I still recommend continuing residential training but would couple with it a change in the concept of learning and education.

## **2. Lack of a clearly defined idea of our end-product**

What kind of person do we expect to see emerging at the end of the training we give? Dr. Devadasan says that the whole system of education becomes meaningful only with reference to an understanding of the end-product. What do we expect the students to be and to do at the end of their course of study? Answers here are vague. The end-product depends not only upon the content we teach but also on our methods. If we teach people merely by pouring out information to be memorised, and testing them to see if they absorbed it, we find them losing the faculty to think. After they have slaved to pass exams and earn a degree, they feel they have reached their goal. So they do not want to look at a book again or do any further academic work.

Some Christian ministers are known to be the laziest, most out-of-date of any men in any profession. Concerned only with their position and prestige, they have become a class of people cut off from the community and least competent professionally. I met one such pastor on a certain Saturday evening, who had something in mind he wanted to preach on but didn't know where to find a [p. 126](#) Bible passage to fit it! Is this the end-product theological institutes take pride in producing?

## **3. Dominance of the administrative side in education**

By this I mean there is a tendency to set up a system and expect men to fit into it, instead of seeking to understand the needs of man and setting up a system that meets their needs. So the system becomes sacrosanct and all students must bow to it. We have students in theological colleges who are average, but there are a few who are brilliant. Yet we put them all through the same slot of a three-year BD programme, set up for the best of the average students. I have seen a young man with good qualities and spiritual insight who could not make the grade academically in the three-year programme. He needed more time. But since there was no arrangement for that, he had to discontinue his theological studies. Many average students work and work but do not see success, become discouraged and drop out. On the other hand, the brilliant student, from lack of challenge, becomes lethargic and discontented.

The examination system says 'Pass' or 'Fail'. There is no measure of improvement an individual has made over himself, and there is no recognition of his input—his effort. So the brilliant student, with scarcely any effort, can go from success to success while another, giving everything he has to make the grade, goes from failure to failure. Is this justified? Should not the administration seek to find a way to evaluate the student against himself, to recognise his individual development, and help him at his own pace to achieve the standard of achievement required to earn his BD degree?

## **4. Disregard for the affective domain**

The affective domain means the feeling (limbic) brain, which psychologists tell us plays a key role in all education. How is it that theological institutions neglect this tremendously

important area of emotion which is the key to all motivation, which enriches all social relationships and is so vital in religious experience? How is it that we recognise only mental achievement and mark 'pass' or 'fail' only on the basis of academic standing?

It is often assumed that a person's character is an individual [p. 127](#) matter, whereas his marks or grades are an institutional matter. Therefore, the cognitive domain of academic development receives attention to the neglect of the affective domain or emotional, social and spiritual enrichment.

Evaluation of progress in the affective domain is extremely difficult and, as a result, procedures for this are seldom considered.

### **5. Competition, not co-operation, prime motivation**

At present education is based on competition. Constant emphasis is put on the belief that students will only work for a prize or from pressure of desire to be first or to receive a certificate, and that without these inducements most students will not work at all. This seems to be the appalling result of the acquisitive and utilitarian aims of our educational system. One wants to go higher and higher even at the cost of others. Hence our examination-ridden classrooms are no training ground for honesty, sincerity and free growth towards maturity.

## **SOME PROPOSALS FOR OVERCOMING THESE WEAKNESSES**

Allow me to make a few moderate proposals which I believe will help us do a better job of teaching in our residential theological institutions.

### **1. Let us begin with a behavioural development approach**

Our selection of content, methods of teaching and evaluation (testing) make sense only when we have the end-product in mind. Dr. Devadasan gives an example of the carpenter who makes a chair. Before he begins, he has his pattern clearly in mind. Every piece must fit into the pattern. His way of working and the materials he chooses are determined by the pattern he has before him.

(a) *What do I want to develop in the person?* Education must be centred on the person. His natural interests reflect his need to understand the world and find his place in it. Each person has a basic urge to do or to make things, to know and to think, and to love and be loved. There are three areas of development or [p. 128](#) domains: cognitive (knowing, thinking, etc.); affective (feeling, appreciation, interest, etc.); psychomotor (willing and doing). A Chinese proverb says:

I listen and I forget,  
I see and I remember,  
I do and I understand.

Hence there can be cross-play or interaction between several areas or domains. One can learn more by doing than simply by listening. One must give consideration to all domains in the development of the person.

The syllabi need to make the natural interests of students the starting-point of education, of 'drawing out' all the student's faculties. There should be scope for reflection (doing theology), reasoning, analysing, arguing the case and creative thinking. In such an atmosphere, courses become meaningful and have a practical bearing on life.

For example, take a course on the prophets. In order to make the course relevant, we know students will need to develop certain skills. They must have the ability to:

- (1) Outline the content of each prophetic book.
- (2) Identify the historical situation in which each prophet worked.
- (3) Recognise the relationship between the prophet's message and his historical situation.
- (4) Apply the message of the prophet to the situation today.

You will notice that each of these objectives is progressive in the development of student behaviour. Here the teacher has to list *specific* objectives to answer his questions: What are the practical abilities and types of behaviour which the student needs to develop to achieve the end product? He can find the answer only as he is clear about what that end-product is.

(b) *How best can I develop the abilities of the person?* This question is concerned with methods, materials and activities employed by the teacher. If his aim is clear, even the content he uses will become the means, not the end, of achieving the essential p. 129 behavioural objectives. Now, if all you want to produce in your students is the ability to be good scribes, just go on dictating detailed notes in the class!

(c) *How can I evaluate the development in the person?* Here we see a vital relationship between what we want to develop and what we want to test. Having identified objectives and chosen methods for use in achieving these objectives., it is also necessary to devise suitable devices to find out to what extent the goals have been achieved. This is a radical concept of evaluation. It is not to pass or fail a student, but to find out how much development has taken place! Each test item is to be designed keeping in mind not only the topic covered but also the objective in view. This third question will also force us to evaluate our methods, materials, and activities performed by the student in terms of the product. This will also help the teacher to modify his methods and activities in a logical way.

## 2. Let us lift instruction step by step to the highest level of learning

Dr. Devadasan says: 'Failure in educational institutions may be due to the use of unsuitable student behaviour in teaching and learning. Much of the failure of our academic institutions is because we attempt to make pupils remember knowledge instead of developing interests, skills, attitudes and application.' He develops five levels of learning. Let me name them:

(a) *Rote memory level*, including imitating, duplicating, repeating and copying. At this level the learner repeats something a number of times so as to make it automatic.

(b) *Recognition level*, including recognising, identifying, remembering and recalling. Learning at this level requires some mental manipulation beyond mere imitation.

(c) *Restatement level*, including comparing, relating, distinguishing, clarifying, illustrating and reformulating. Students at this level may have little difficulty in recognising, identifying and recalling, and their performance in external examinations will be superior to those who are wholly prepared for recalling or remembering, etc. The teacher in preparing a student at this level should provide a number of opportunities for comparing related things, distinguishing, illustrating, classifying, and so on.

(d) *Application level*, including analysing, formulating hypothesis, p. 130 drawing inference, explaining, defining, predicting, estimating, interpreting and making critical judgements. One can readily see this is a higher level of learning than previously considered, and must build on the other levels. The student must reach the level where he applies what he is learning to actual situations to see if it works.

(e) *Transfer level*, including reorganising, formulating new theory or hypothesis, discovering, creating, inventing and solving complex problems. This involves putting the



learning to use in new situations, combining it with other aspects of learning and coming up with creative work.

In all our training it is important that we aim towards eventually covering the five levels of learning and thus producing creative persons. All should be creative at their own level of ability.

### **3. Let us evaluate at every level of learning**

Our evaluation must take into account the level of learning reached by the student in a given field. Also, the domains should be covered. Certain ways of testing are appropriate for certain types of behaviour. For example: assignment to test classifying, analysing, essay questions to test describing, organising, etc.; objective questions to test recall or memory.

The purpose of the test is to help the teacher or student realise whether the goals are achieved or not, and to make the student more goal-conscious than exam-conscious. Before a paper is prepared, it is necessary to decide the weightage to be given to different objectives (knowledge, understanding, application), topics, and types of questions (essay, short essay, short answer).

It is suggested that there should be a minimum number of options in a given paper. Options decrease the measuring efficiencies of the test, give a false impression of coverage of topics and work against the interest of the average student. If options are given at all, they should be internal options, i.e. either .. or. Both alternatives should be devised to test the same ability or behavioural development.

### **4. Let us aim towards flexibility**

There must be flexibility in our programmes. Can there not be a one-year, three-year and a four-year BD programme in order to **p. 131** allow students to go at their own pace? This will give everyone a chance to succeed, given the necessary time and tools. A slow student can take fewer hours and develop at a slower pace while a faster one can speed ahead. Where a student should fit in could be decided after his first term of work.

Extension programmes, especially programmed instruction, emphasise this aspect of flexibility very much, for each course is set up so that a student may learn at his own pace.

### **5. Let us develop the affective domain**

The approach for the cognitive domain can equally be applied to the affective domain. But the actual procedures may differ. Let me give an individual illustration. A monk who became very callous and dry followed a friend's suggestion to do a bit of gardening. He planted some flowers and watched the plants grow until the flowers appeared. Then a cow came. (This must have been in India!) The cow ate all the plants and flowers, and the man, who had never cried in his mature life, began weeping. His affective domain had been touched.

Opportunity for individuals to develop spiritually through meditation, prayer and discipline must be provided for.

Group activities, such as games, sports and projects give good opportunities for development in this area. For example, in playing volleyball, one may channel his *ego* into ambition for reaching team goals. He learns team co-operation, respect for orders, fair play, justice, and willingness to accept defeat. He develops qualities of leadership and unselfishness in willingness to give others a chance rather than to dominate the scene. Also, large group activities can be planned, such as worship services or retreats.

This domain including the emotional, social and spiritual development of the person, is most important for the theological student who wishes to become an effective minister.

### **6. Let us train students to work together**

The apostle Paul reminds us that the best things in life can be gained only through working together ([Ephesians 4:13, 15](#)). So education should not be setting one student against another. Personal responsibility and individual talents should be developed [p. 132](#) within the framework of a co-operative community. The most delicate task of education, and a supremely important one, is to help the growing personality recognise the claims of divine standards and be moved to respond. Every student has to grow towards the ideal Christ, the man for others. Each student has to learn that his self-regarding and aggressive impulses must be sublimated and redirected, because his own life can only reach its full flowering and fruition in the community of his fellows. This is not to say that there should be no reward for outstanding achievements of individuals within the group, but it should be given as recognition of their contribution to united effort and common goals, rather than as a prize for which to compete.

### **7. Let us teach with inspiration and enthusiasm**

Marjorie Sykes says: 'Most of our teachers do not need training, they need conversion. They need to be turned right round mentally, to look at their work from a new point of view.' Person-centred education will bring a new dynamic into the teaching situation. Without this conversion, mere training in a new technique of teaching will only replace one static system with another.

But teaching is a noble profession; it is not only a science, but an art. Knowing subject-matter is not enough. Skills in communication, in psychological understanding of persons, in evaluating readiness, in the knowledge of how persons learn and how to adapt methods to each situation—all are important aspects of teaching.

Above all, one must recognise the place of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Maurice Culver raises the question, 'Do we have gifts of teaching naturally or can we get them from God if we are assigned teaching ministry? It seems to me that an affirmative answer to the question indicates a strong spiritual quality inherent in these gifts. There is more than perfection of techniques, there is more than development of art and style, there is more than thorough knowledge of the subject; there is also a spiritual quality of attitude, dedication, wisdom, insight, and love in an inspired teacher.'

To put it simply, the ministry of the Holy Spirit must be recognised in our teaching. We can hinder or aid the divine flow of life called 'being filled with the Holy Spirit'. The Holy Spirit who inspires us is also the inspirer within the student using our [p. 133](#) humble methods and personalities to the glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## **CONCLUSION**

What we need is not just innovations or better methods but a radical change in our concept of education: learning as experience, *versus* gathering content, a body of information. We must treat our students as persons, not as boxes to be filled little by little, with little, logically arranged, packets of information. We must expect them to develop abilities, to grow in the experience of the Lord ([II Peter 3:18](#)). Our Lord did not say, '... teaching all nations all (content) I have commanded you', but rather, '... teaching all nations to observe all that I have commanded you' ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)). So Christian education is teaching everyone to *observe*, to do, to carry out, to experience all God's Word to man.

# The Volitional Domain

LYLE DARNAUER

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FROM A variety of sources we are confronted with the fact of neglect in this area of learning. A great deal of education is being criticised for not being practice-oriented: at the best we are merely stuffing heads with a bunch of facts, with useless knowledge at the worst. Seminaries are no exception to this criticism. Many is the time we have heard people commenting as they came out of church: 'The preacher surely stirred us, but what are we supposed to do now?' indicating that not much of any practical use was said about how we are to apply or use the lessons we have heard from the Bible. A common complaint about Sunday school type lessons is that they tell a story well, perhaps may even get the emotions aroused, but then end up with a very simplistic and general kind of moral, rather than aiming at some specific action. Again, a criticism directed at much of what comes under the heading of Christian teaching involves the idea of hearing the same old 'shalts' and 'shalt nots' again and again.

I believe that one of the basic objectives of seminary training of any sort, should be to produce what I call 'practical prophets'. These are Christian leaders who see and feel the injustices of their own era (as the Bible prophets did) and bring God's judgement and warning to bear on them. This is not to be done in some abstract and generalised fashion but rather in terms of specifics, a step-by-step knowledge setting out the steps the Christian can and should be taking to set right those injustices on his doorstep. As indicated in my book *Teaching and Learning in the Christian Church*, this neglect of the volitional domain, or if you prefer it, the action of the prophetic domain, is unusual, for this seems to be the logical and Biblical goal of all our teaching and efforts at making disciples. This is the practical side of knowledge and the result of desired attitudes, values, and beliefs. p. 135

In line with the taxonomies of the cognitive and affective domains, I have taken five levels for the volitional domain, which correspond roughly to those used in the other two domains. It can most easily be pictured as a sort of ideal maturation in actions as a child grows from early childhood to a mature adulthood. At first, the child is aware of demands made on him for some sort of action. As he is socialised in his family he gradually becomes aware that there are choices possible in actions. From there he gradually progresses to responses which involve more and more a weighing of acts and responses. There will be movement from behaviour because of external authority, to behaviour because of internal compulsion. As a person moves upward through these development levels, there will be a move to organise behaviour into some sort of pattern or system. Finally, in a truly mature person there will be the development which allows and enables the person to meet new situations and fit such into the system of organised and internalised behaviours

of self, which will be appropriate to the situation and also congruent with one's basic organised system.

A taxonomy using these five levels and stated in a more formal way is set up as follows:

1. *An awareness of the necessity for action.*

This is the lowest level and comes to one through external sources of authority. The lack of even this level is often found in formal studies. Its most usual form is in the moralising approach which seems to reduce action to the level of 'bossing round little children in the home'. This is better than nothing, but it should be recognised as the lowest level, and hardly consistent with the new life in Christ.

2. *Recognising the possibility of choice.*

This level is seen in the child learning to say 'no' to commands and requests from parents. It is the beginning of a conscious rebellion in which one recognises the possibility that there is more than one way of behaving. For a Christian, this is when one becomes aware of the possibility of sin and the fact that one can make a conscious choice for and against the will of God. This could be described as a transitional level when one begins to realise that choices are not always good/bad dichotomies: that there is a [p. 136](#) choice of many possible answers in terms of behaviour in a given situation.

3. *Weighing the possible actions and possible consequences of action.*

This level begins to move a person into an inner-directed action pattern as opposed to an outer- (or other-) directed behaviour pattern. In the spiritual realm we are concerned, not so much with following or refusing to follow external orders under threats or promises, as with an inner-directed life following from internalised motivations of higher and higher orders. This transition begins when a person can (and more and more does) look carefully at possible courses of action and weighs their consequences, which are then deliberately and consciously acted upon. It would seem that by the time of commitment the person is pretty well on this level of behaviour.

4. *Organisation of behaviour into a consistent whole.*

This is a more difficult level to attain. It follows along with the taxonomies of the cognitive and affective domains, and parallels them. It means that life is no longer compartmentalised—that what happens on weekdays is part of the whole of life including Sundays. This is the level at which we begin moving out from under the charge of hypocrisy and begin living a consistent life.

5. *Incorporation of new situations into one's inner-directed organisation of behaviour.*

This is the culminating stage at which one becomes most truly inner-directed. Up to this point, one can almost be 'programmed' to respond properly in given situations, even to the level of having one's life consistently organised as a whole. Now, however, the person is on his own. He is no longer a rule-following animal, he is more fully becoming an inner-directed and maturing child of God, a disciple. One is well enough trained in the 'Way' so that any new situation can be faced and worked through with a minimum of problems. All the previous elements of the volitional domain culminate in the person who is now confident and able to meet a new situation, in such a way that one is true to one's own organisation of behaviour as well as being relevant and effective in the new situation.

It may seem to have been a long digression to have looked at this simplified taxonomy of the volitional domain, but I believe that [p. 137](#) whether we want to use this in life-situations, to teach and move people to action, or to programme the various subjects in TEE, the first step is to understand this taxonomy. Not only this, but to recognise that we must teach (or programme) in all three domains. It is a truism which we can discover for ourselves, that if we teach on a high level in the cognitive domain, then we must also teach on the same level in the other two domains. The use of the three domains in our

programming needs to be balanced, both in terms of the three domains and also in terms of the level at which we teach.

A second step in programming the volitional domain is to formulate objectives for the appropriate levels. It is especially difficult to do so in TEE courses! We do not normally ask ourselves what for the O.T. prophets is the basic question: 'What action does this lead to?' We tend rather to divorce academic subjects from the volitional (or action) domain. To sit down deliberately and force oneself to write volitional objectives is a necessity—but you will soon realise how difficult it is! For one thing, the objectives soon begin to look alike, and tend to be very general.

Having written these specific objectives, the third step is to write your programme. I have discovered that unless we teach the volitional domain deliberately and get our students to practise what we are teaching, no progress is made in the area of behaviour. In this third stage we need to be as concrete and practical as possible in giving students practice in 'real-life' situations, if we are at all concerned with training 'practical prophets'.

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## Book Reviews

### **DEUTERONOMY: AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY**

by J. A. THOMPSON.

(London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1974. Pp. 320, £ 1.95 paperback.)

Abstract of a review by G. J. WENHAM, *The Evangelical Quarterly*, January–March 1976 (Vol. 48, No. 1).

THIS is the latest volume in the Tyndale Old Testament commentary series. Thompson demonstrates a refreshing independence of spirit as he handles the critical issues connected with this book. In his Introduction he surveys all the main critical theories that have been advanced in the last 50 years, outlines the arguments in their favour, and pin-points their weaknesses. His Introduction is followed by a full and thorough exegesis of the text. Here he shows himself fully abreast of the latest linguistic, legal, and archaeological material that sheds light on the meaning of the text. Though it is weak in its theological treatment, it is one of the best commentaries on Deuteronomy to have appeared this century. Dr. Thompson is Principal of the Baptist College, Auckland, New Zealand.

### **THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT**

ed. by KURT ALAND, MATTHEW BLACK and others, in co-operation with the Institute for New Testament Textual Research, Munster West, third edition.

(London: United Bible Societies, 1975. Pp. 980, no price listed.)

Abstract of booknote by LARRY W. HURTADO, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, March 1977 (Vol. 20, No. 1).



THIS third edition of the UBS Greek N.T. differs from the first and second editions in important matters. The differences between the first and second editions consisted of changes in the evaluation of evidence for the variant readings. The third edition contains 'a more thorough revision of the Greek text': over 500 changes have been incorporated into the new edition. Other differences include minor corrections in text and apparatus, some changes in evaluation [p. 139](#) of evidence, a re-written index of quotations, and changes in punctuation. One new development marked by this edition is that it contains a text identical to that of the 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland N.T. It includes the earlier companion volume, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (ed. Metzger, 1971), which discusses the readings chosen in this edition.

## **THE BOOKS OF JOEL, OBADIAH, JONAH, NAHUM, HABAKKUK AND ZEPHANIAH**

commentary by J. D. W. WATTS.

(Cambridge University Press, 1975. Pp. 190, £1.90.)

Abstract of a review by D. F. Payne, *The Evangelical Quarterly*, January–March 1976 (Vol. 48, No. 1).

THE treatment of these six minor prophets is one of the best contributions so far to the Cambridge Bible Commentary series on the New English Bible. It is by no means simply a channel through which 'the results of modern scholarship are made available to the general reader', but a book of some distinction. In his treatment of Jonah, its message is highlighted, while the age-old controversy as to historicity is very much muted. The commentary on Obadiah is especially attractive. In a helpful introduction to the prophetic literature, he finds a unifying setting for these six prophets; they represent 'prophecy in worship', and liturgical aspects of all six are emphasised throughout his exegesis. Whether or not the reader is convinced that the liturgical approach is the best one, this commentary displays to best advantage the insights of such an approach. Dr. Watts was formerly Professor of O.T. at Scrampore College, India. He now teaches at Fuller Theological Seminary, USA.

## **PSALMS 73–100**

by DEREK KIDNER.

(Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975. Pp. 233, \$7.95.)

Abstract of a review by HAROLD H. P. DRESSLER, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Fall 1976 (Vol. 19, No. 4).

THIS little volume in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries completes Kidner's work on the Psalms. He continues the practice of giving each Psalm a short, concise heading, helpful to preachers but dissatisfying with regard to many Psalms that express [p. 140](#) more than one central theme. Kidner has wrestled with specific problems in the Psalms and attempted scholarly solutions. He is careful not to accept too quickly changes suggested by Ugaritologists. This volume, read together with the first, is an elegant scholarly contribution that will be most welcome to preachers and students alike.

## **A GUIDE TO ROMANS**

by ROGER BOWEN. TEF Study Guide II

(London: SPCK, 1975. £2.95: special edition for Africa, Asia, South Pacific, Caribbean £1.50.)

Abstract of a review in *Evangelical Quarterly*, April–June 1976 (Vol. 48, No. 2).

THIS work is one of a series of study guides published in association with the United Society for Christian Literature for the Theological Education Fund. The verbal and visual illustrations are carefully chosen so as to appeal to readers in the third world; for example, the law is compared with the sun shining through the windows of a house revealing dirt and insects. [Romans 6:14](#) is illustrated with a photograph of the lowering of the Union Jack in Botswana with the caption 'In what ways is a Christian's "independence" from sin like, and unlike, a country's independence from colonial or other alien rulers?' The author acknowledges his indebtedness to James Packer, Leon Morris and Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Roger Bowen is a theological teacher in Tanzania.

### **KRISTADVAITA: A THEOLOGY FOR INDIA**

by R. H. S. BOYD.

(Madras: CLS, 1977. Indian price: Rs. 20.)

Reviewed by ASHISH CHRISPAL.

THIS book is an attempt to provide primarily Indian students of theology with a textbook which is reasonably comprehensive in its scope. The book is striking in its methodology. First, it is cast in the general shape of a commentary on Romans in a form of theological exposition frequently followed in India. Secondly, the order of subjects relates to the stages of the 'way of salvation' used by Paul in Romans. Thirdly, Boyd has drawn very little on modern Western theology. Each chapter begins with an examination of the Biblical evidence, followed by the historical development, and [p. 141](#) concludes with the treatment of the subject by Indian Christian theologians. Lastly, as the title suggests, the book sums up the central message of Paul, faith-union with Christ. This book is a must for those interested in indigenisation and contextualisation without being syncretistic. Dr. Boyd served for 13 years on the staff of United School of Theology in Ahmedabad, India, and is now a parish minister in Melbourne, Australia. He is the author of *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*.

### **THE NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY**

ed. COLIN BROWN, 3 Volumes.

(Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1975. £14, £16.50 and £18 respectively.)

Abstract of a review by MAX TURNER from *Themelios*, January 1977 (Vol. 2, No. 2).

THE NIDNTT is a basic translation, with extensive revision and considerable enlargement, of the *Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament* published from 1965 onwards. The whole work comprises 330 major articles treating more than 2,500 Biblical words which are grouped thematically and are seen against the background of the Greek world, Rabbinic thought, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Old Testament. It differs from the larger nine-volume Kittel Theological Dictionary of the New Testament in that it is less complex and takes account of latest Biblical scholarship. With the inclusion of a number of evangelical scholars, it has a more conservative flavour. The work can be used by any student and does not demand knowledge of Greek or Hebrew. All words in Greek are given in transliteration as well as in Greek characters. All Hebrew and Aramaic words are given in transliteration only. The glossary of technical terms offers concise definitions of a wide range of specialist expressions and terms currently used in contemporary theology. It has

an excellent index to Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words and theological subjects. The editor, Dr. Colin Brown, is a member of the faculty of Trinity College, Bristol. He has been visiting professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, and at Regent College, Vancouver. [p. 142](#)

## **DICCIONARIO ILLUSTRADO DE LA BIBLIA**

ed. by WILTON NELSON.

(Editorial Caribe, 1974. Pp. 735, \$14.95.)

Abstract of a review by STEPHEN SYWULKA, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, July–September 1976 (Vol. 12, No. 3).

THIS Dictionary is a Spanish translation of William Rand's Dictionary of the Bible published 1890. It is a completely new and original Spanish work of 2,100 articles. More than half the contributors are Latin American or Spanish nationals. Apart from a few contradictions, it is a solid, evangelical and scholarly work. The General Editor is Professor and ex-Rector of the Latin American Biblical Seminary in Costa Rica.

## **I BELIEVE SERIES (HODDER AND STOUGHTON AND WM. B. EERDMANS).**

### **I BELIEVE IN REVELATION**

by LEON MORRIS

(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976. Pp. 160, £2.60 or \$2.95.)

Abstract of a review of J. W. WENHAM, *Christian Graduate*, December 1976, No. 4.

IN the face of widespread denial of the reality or the relevance of revelation, Leon Morris with his usual sanity and solidarity deals trenchantly with those would-be Christians who wish to abandon revelation. He discusses the relation between God's general revelation in nature and his special revelation in the Bible. He shows the inescapable importance of words in the communication of revelation. Finally he discusses the uniqueness of the revelation of God in Christ in relation to other religions.

### **I BELIEVE IN THE GREAT COMMISSION**

by MAX WARREN.

(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976. Pp. 190, £2.60 or \$2.95.)

Abstract of a review by A. S. NEECH, *Churchman*, July 1977 (Vol. 91, No. 3).

DR. MAX WARREN argues that Jesus himself is the Great Commission. The first section deals with the New Testament evidence about Jesus setting forth both the exclusive demand of our Lord and his inclusive intention. Section two looks at the 'bitter-sweet story' of the next 1,900 years in terms of the fourfold pattern of [p. 143](#) preaching, teaching, healing, witness. In the third section, Warren begins to grapple with the major problem of the relation of Christianity to other great faiths. He then searchingly deals with seven aspects of the Christian's life and work in obeying the Great Commission. A lifetime of commitment to the Great Commission, optimism and quiet confidence characterise this fascinating book.

Other books in the same series are:

*I believe in the Holy Spirit*, by MICHAEL GREEN.

*I believe in the Historical Jesus*, by I. HOWARD MARSHALL.

*I believe in Evangelism*, by DAVID WATSON.

*I believe in the Resurrection of Jesus*, by GEORGE ELTON LADD.

**JESUS AND THE SPIRIT: A STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS AND  
CHARISMATIC EXPERIENCE OF JESUS AND THE FIRST CHRISTIANS AS  
REFLECTED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

by JAMES D. G. DUNN.

(London: New Testament Library, SCM, 1975. Pp. 515, £9.50.)

Abstract of a review by MAX TURNER, *Themelios*, January 1977, (Vol. 2, No. 2).

DUNN presents us with a full-scale, massively documented discussion of the religious experience of Jesus, of the earliest Christian communities, and of Paul and the Pauline Churches. The first part is an attempt to construct a picture of Jesus' experience of God beginning with Jesus' prayer life and his use of the word 'Abba'. The second part deals with the religious experience of the earliest community. The third examines the religious experience of Pauline churches and of Paul himself. According to Dunn, Paul's experience of Charisma was an event and *charismata* are grace in action. The Spirit was a shared and vital experience of the community. The book closes with a brief glance at the Pastoral Epistles where the Church has replaced the community. The book is to be highly commended even though it raises a number of questions on which many will disagree.

**COMMUNITY OF THE SPIRIT**

by C. NORMAN KRAUS.

(Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974. Pp. 104, \$2.95.)

Abstract of a review by ROSEMARY JAMES, *Incite*, July 1976. [p. 144](#)

KRAUS's book is a timely reminder of the nature and calling of the first apostolic Church. It identifies some major weaknesses in traditional Protestant thought, and calls for living in reconciliation with the brethren within the 'new-covenant community Church'. The Gospel begins in the Incarnation and continues in the Church. In assessing the thought of pentecostal, pietistic and holiness traditions of contemporary evangelicalism, he reveals some common unbiblical assumptions, such as an individualistic definition of salvation. They fail to recognise that Biblical man is individual-in-community. He argues that the Church is not a voluntary, contractual society of people sharing a common goal, but an organic entity—a body of members belonging to each other.

**RECONCILIATION AND HOPE: NEW TESTAMENT ESSAYS ON  
ATONEMENT AND ESCHATOLOGY**

ed. by ROBERT BANKS.

(Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974. Pp. 317, \$6.95.)

Abstract of a review by ALLISON A. TRITES, *Evangelical Theological Society*, Winter 1976 (Vol. 19, No. 1).

THE author of numerous books and articles, Dr. Leon Morris is noted for his Biblical scholarship, and for a style characterised by clarity, courtesy and fairness. This *Festschrift* pays a fitting tribute to Dr. Morris on his 60th birthday. Out of the 19 essays, written by Biblical scholars from around the world, ten are devoted to some aspect of reconciliation and nine to the eschatological theme of hope. An appreciation by David A. Hubbard and a

select bibliography of Morris's publications complete the volume. The footnotes are extensive, the Greek references are copious and the discussion is sophisticated. It offers a rich exegetical feast to the student who is prepared for the hard work of 'testing all things and holding fast to that which is good'.

**CURRENT ISSUES IN BIBLICAL AND PATRISTIC INTERPRETATION:  
STUDIES IN HONOR OF MERRILL C. TENNEY PRESENTED BY HIS  
FORMER STUDENTS**

ed. by GERALD F. HAWTHORNE.

(Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975. Pp. 377, \$9.95.)

Abstract of a review by I. HOWARD MARSHALL, *Evangelical Quarterly*, January–March 1976 (Vol. 48, No. 1). [p. 145](#)

THIS *Festschrift* in honour of Dr. Tenney, formerly Dean of Graduate Studies of Wheaton College, is distinguished by 28 essays written by his former students. The contributions cover a wide range of subjects both Biblical and patristic, and even the theology of mission and evangelism. Some articles are radical for a traditionalist position. Though it lacks an index, the volume, enriched by an introduction by F.F. Bruce and an appreciation by the President of Wheaton College, is a worthy gift to Dr. Tenney on his 70th birthday.

**LETTERS OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD (1734–1742): A FACSIMILE OF  
WHITEFIELD'S WORKS, VOLUME ONE (1771), WITH SUPPLEMENTS.**

(Banner of Truth Trust, 1976. Pp. 570, £3.50.)

Abstract of a review by PETE BROADBENT, *Churchman*, July 1977 (Vol. 91, No. 3).

THIS new edition is a facsimile of the first edition of Whitefield's works published a year after his death. It contains 497 letters written by Whitefield during the first years of the 'Methodist' revival in England and the Great Awakening in America, plus a supplement of 34 others from the same period. They provide a valuable insight into the thought-forms and spirituality of the 18th century revival. Whitefield's pithy style, genuine humility, cogent presentation of spiritual truth and inherent ability to make doctrine a springboard to devotion ensure light and rewarding reading. S. M. Houghton supplies 45 pages of valuable background notes and there is a comprehensive index of correspondents.

**A THEOLOGY OF LOVE: THE DYNAMIC OF WESLEYANISM**

by MILDRED BANGS WYNKOOP.

(Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1972. Pp. 376.)

Abstract of a review by MORRIS A. INCH, *Evangelical Theological Society*, Fall 1976 (Vol. 19, No. 4).

THIS work is a call to Christian renewal and not simply or primarily a speculative discussion of the Wesleyan doctrinal peculiarities. The authoress takes two routes for Church renewal: through the recovery of a Wesleyan perspective and through interacting with the Biblical text. She focuses on the Wesleyan hermeneutic of [p. 146](#) love. Though the work lacks the historical framework of Wesley's day, yet its important contribution is the effort to recast Wesley's approach to Scripture. She offers a valuable reference volume on a Wesleyan understanding on a wide range of subjects. The whole work is centred around the theology of love encircled by Wesleyan theology. She makes theology relevant for daily living and the market place.



## **THE PROBLEM OF WINE SKINS: CHURCH STRUCTURE IN A TECHNOLOGICAL AGE**

by HOWARD A. SNYDER.

(Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975. Pp. 214, \$3.95 paper.)

Abstract of a review by BARBARA J. HAMPTON, from *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, April 1977 (Vol. 13, No. 2).

THIS book has special relevance to the institutionalised North American churches, but it is also rich with insights for cross-cultural evangelism and Church-planting. Dr. Snyder is concerned that the wine of the Gospel has the new wineskins, i.e. new Church structure. Church buildings and programmes may be hindering proclamation, preventing the 'wine' from making our culture glad in the Lord. A local Church should have a small-group/large-group rhythm and leadership through spiritual gifts. The Church, he insists, must be preaching the Gospel to the poor, as in the 1st century, otherwise it distorts the Gospel. Para-church structures are often culturally bound and should be discarded when no longer usable as wineskins. A key to Snyder's analysis is his view that the mobile tabernacle is a truer symbol of the presence of God in our midst than the temple. Anyone concerned about the shape of the Church of the future should read this valuable book. Dr. Snyder served with Free Methodist Church in Brazil for six years.

## **EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GROW A MESSIANIC SYNAGOGUE**

by PHILLIP E. GOBLE.

(South Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1974. Pp. 158, \$2.45.)

Abstract of a review by TOM HANKS, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, January 1976 (Vol. 12, No. 1).

IN this provocative study, Goble contends that James of Jerusalem, not Paul, provides the proper model for reaching Jews. The aim is [p. 147](#) not to incorporate Jews into Gentile churches but rather to establish synagogues where Jews acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah and emphasise their Jewishness. Such messianic synagogues are to be characterised by their adherence to Old Testament commands (circumcision, sabbath, etc.), as well as Jewish culture. He does not advocate legalistic religion but that Jews become more Jewish in order to win their fellows. Though at places one may not agree with what Goble advocates and ask why he did not use Peter as a model, this study is of value for involvement in Jewish and cross-cultural evangelism.

## **PEACE CHILD**

by DON RICHARDSON.

(Glendale, California: Regal Books, 1974. Pp. 287, \$3.95.)

Abstract of a review by C. PETER WAGNER, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, January 1977 (Vol. 13, No. 1).

IN the missionary literature of the 1970s, *Peace Child* will have a prominent place among the top 10 books. It skilfully combines drama, human interest and spiritual depth with creative and highly-developed missiological insights. The book has appeal not only to the popular market (*Readers Digest* condensed version, January 1976) but to the scholarly community as well. It is the story of how Don and Carol Richardson skilfully evangelised the Sawi tribe of Irian Jaya and its practical insights are applicable to almost any field. Missiological insights include the power encounter between the spirit world and Jesus Christ and the redemptive analogy of the exchange of a live child who later died with Jesus

as God's peace child. Richardson argues that 'peace child' is analagous to the Hebrew paschal Lamb or the Greek Logos. Here is a book with plenty of food for thought and for missionary strategy planning.

**GO FORTH AND TELL: REPORT OF THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS ON  
MISSION AND EVANGELISATION, DEVLALI 1977.**

(New Delhi: AICOME, Indian price: Rs. 8.)

THIS collection of inspirational Biblical and strategy papers and responses is well produced. Written with deep conviction and compassion, the papers deal with cross-cultural evangelism and Church-planting, p. 148 Church renewal and the relationship of evangelism and social action. The Devlali Findings and regional reports ably express the spirit of the Congress. This report has an important place in the movement for world evangelisation.

**TWO BOOKS FROM TUBINGEN, GERMANY**

**DAS ENDE DER HISTORISCH-KRITISCHEN METHODE**

by GERHARD MAIER.

(Wuppertal: Theologischer Verlag R. Brockhaus, 1974. Pp. 95, DM 9.80.)

Abstract of a review by PETER H. DAVIDS, *Themelios*, Spring 1976 (Vol. 1, No. 2).

DR. MAIER defends the authority of Scripture over against the historical-critical method of exegesis. He argues that the historical-critical method must lead to an exegetical dead end and can never produce either scholarly agreement or a separation of the divine kernel from the human shell in Scripture. In the first part Maier demonstrates the failure to discover the 'canon within the canon'. He then takes up the difficult job of developing and defending a historical-Biblical method against the critical method. Lastly he outlines an exegetical method based on the principles of the unity of Scripture. Though Maier's dogmatic rather than exegetical and historical approach ends in subjectivity, this book is worthy of careful consideration. Dr. Maier is the Studienleiter of the Albrecht-Bengel-Haus in Tubingen.

**PROPERTY AND RICHES IN THE EARLY CHURCH**

by MARTIN HENGEL.

(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, and London: SCM Press, 1974. Pp. 88, \$2.95/£1.25.)

Abstract of a review by UDO W. MIDDELMANN, *Themelios*, Spring 1976 (Vol. 1, No. 2).

IN the midst of the discussion over the place of property in today's society, the author presents us with a wide compilation of sources that bear upon the subject of the relationship between man and matter, work and property. Here Hengel gives us a detailed account of the social history of Early Christianity. He understands the New Testament teaching on riches and property to be different and only marginally affected by theories of past utopias. He p. 149 argues that the early Church's detachment from valuables was widespread because of the expectation of Christ's return and the end of the world. This little volume is valuable as an example of the effort and intent of much of modern rationalistic scholarship. Martin Hengel is the professor of New Testament and Early Judaism at the University of Tubingen.

## **RICH CHRISTIANS IN AN AGE OF HUNGER: A BIBLICAL STUDY**

by RONALD J. SIDER.

(Paulist Press, and Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977. Pp. 249, \$4.95.)

Abstract of a review by C. DEAN FREUDENBERGER, *Occasional Bulletin*, April 1977 (Vol. 1, No. 2).

If there is one issue that dominates the thought and life patterns of nearly two thirds of the world's people today it is hunger. Sider, who is a professor of History and Religion at Messiah College, Philadelphia, has written a heart-searching book which the reviewer believes is the best on the issue. Sider surveys the contemporary economic scene and observes that rich Christians have allowed economic self-interest to control their interpretation of Scripture. The author gives a good Biblical perspective on God's love for the poor and oppressed and on property and wealth. He calls Christians to a radical non-conformity in personal lifestyle, Church participation and responsibility for national and international economic policies and structure change. A challenging book every Christian should read.

## **A BETTER WAY: THE CASE FOR A CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ORDER**

by SIR FREDERICK CATHERWOOD.

(London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975. Pp. 157, £1.50.)

Abstract of a review by F. F. BRUCE, *Evangelical Quarterly*, July–September 1976 (Vol. 48, No. 3).

In presenting the case for a Christian social order, the writer is far from proposing a blueprint for Utopia. He begins with the Christian moral order and ends with Christian liberty, and in between he discusses the dignity of man, family order, civil order, the nation, economic order and Church order. He expresses himself with wisdom and sobriety on issues such as pornography, [p. 150](#) permissiveness and capital punishment for murder. It is interesting to note the author's reasons for regarding ethnic nationalism today as more dangerous than Marxism. The book offers a Christian reflection on nearly every current question of public concern. It is heartily commended as a study and discussion manual.

## **IN TWO MINDS (USA) OR DOUBT (UK)**

by OS GUINNESS.

(Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, and Berkhamsted, Lion, 1976. Pp. 302, \$4.95/£0.95.)

Abstract of a review by MARK P. BRANSON from *Themelios*, September 1977 (Vol. 3, No. 1).

'WHAT is most damaging to Christianity is not that Christians doubt but that there seems to be so little open discussion and understanding of doubt. This must change.' Thus Guinness delves into the subject of doubt with unusual competence and thoroughness. Doubt is not the same as unbelief; rather it is a transition between two positions, a stage of neither belief nor unbelief, a situation of being in two minds. And the writer assists the reader in that journey of transition phase, hopefully towards knowledge and faith from doubt. The second section deals with seven types or families of doubt—four concerning initial faith and three concerning the later stages of growth. The third section, 'Care and Counsel', offers practical advice to those wanting to resolve doubt. The final section encounters two major doubts: the problem of the non-availability of sufficient information and the problem of prolonged waiting. This excellent volume provides a well

organised and clearly presented guide for believers and non-believers who wish to wrestle with integrity.

**GUTZENDAMMERUNG IN DEN WISSENSCHAFTEN: KARL HEIM,  
PROPHET UND PIONIER**

by HORST W. BECK.

(Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1974. Pp. 86, DM 9.80.)

Abstract of a review by MANFRED KWIRAN, *Evangelical Theological Society*, Fall 1976 (Vol. 19, No. 4).

KARL HEIM was professor of systematic theology at Tübingen University, who tried to deal with the problems and doubts of his p. 151 time in the areas of social ethics, modern natural science and comparative religion. In this book Beck presents Heim as a prophet in our century and as a pioneer in the dialogue between theology and philosophy and natural science. Beck deals with Heim's presuppositions and interpretation of the times and with his demythology of science. He places modern man before the ultimate either/or, the decision for nihilism or for God. Above all Beck's excellent introduction is a challenge to us as we live as Christians in this world.

**THE WORLD OF GURUS**

by VISHAL K. MANGALWADI.

(New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1977. Pp. 267.)

Abstract of a review by BASIL and SHIRLEY SCOTT, *TRACI/ETS Journal*, May 1977.

THIS is a most exciting, readable and well-planned book on a subject of great topical interest and written for those caught up in guruism. It is both apologetic and evangelistic. He begins by tracing the rise and appeal of 'guruism' today, both in India and in the West. He then describes the most influential, contemporary Indian gurus, dividing them into four groups: the traditional, the heterodox, the miracle workers, and the gurus of sound and light. His descriptions are full and informative and at times appreciative, while at the same time he seeks to evaluate the truth or falsehood of their underlying assumptions. The book concludes with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Sanatan Sadguru Maharaj. One thing that clearly emerges from the teaching of the gurus is their intellectual escapism. To those with minds still open, this study could be helpful, both in exposing the intellectual incompleteness of the gurus' teaching and in putting the Gospel into a terminology understandable to the followers of the gurus.

**WHAT ASIAN CHRISTIANS ARE THINKING: A THEOLOGICAL SOURCE  
BOOK**

ed. by DOUGLAS J. ELWOOD.

(Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1976. Pp. xxxviii+497, no price listed.)

Reviewed by ASHISH CHRISPAL.

THIS book gives convincing evidence that Asian Christians are thinking (and speaking out too!). In the complexity of Asia, p. 152 Christians are caught up in the vortex of social revolution and the search for a new Asian identity. The role of Christian theology is shown in relation to the cultural past and present. This volume brings together 30 theological essays from a wide variety of Asian cultures and Christian communions. The subjects are

discussed under the following themes: Rethinking Christian Theology in Asia, Man in Nature and History, God and Revelation, Christ and the Christian Life, Theology of Mission, Theology of Religious Pluralism, and Theology of Development and Liberation. It is hoped that this collection will encourage better understanding among Asian theologians, and between them and the West.

### **SALVATION TOMORROW**

by STEPHEN NEILL.

(Nashville, Tennessee: 1976, and Lutterworth, 1977, Pp. 150, \$3.95/£1.75.)

Abstract of a review by ROBERT COVELL from *Themelios*, September 1977 (Vol. 3, No. 1).

HERE the writer traces the history of the modern ecumenical movement from its inception at Edinburgh in 1910, analyses its present internal dissensions, and makes a few modest projections about its future course. Describing the period from 1910 to 1970 as a 'century of achievement', Neill optimistically surveys the progress the Christian faith has made in each area of the world. He then discusses four critical issues: dialogue, moratorium, revolution, and theological education. His basic conclusion (p. 125) is that 'at certain points the ecumenical movement seems to have become imprisoned in a past which is no longer with us, and has to some extent abandoned its prophetic role in intense concentration on contemporary problems'. This is a realistic, hopeful book that may help to bridge current polarities and tensions between conciliar ecumenists and conservative evangelicals in the accomplishing of God's mission for tomorrow. Bishop Stephen Neill served in South India and at the University of Nairobi.

### **A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY, 2 VOLS**

by KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE, new edition. Forward and final chapter by RALPH D. WINTER.

(New York: Harper & Row, 1975. Vol. I, 724 pp., Vol. II, 685–1552 pp., \$6.95 each volume.) [p. 153](#)

Abstract of a review by W. RICHEY HOGG, *Occasional Bulletin*, January 1977 (Vol. 1, No. 1).

THE appearance in paperback of Latourette's *History of Christianity* first published in 1953, deserves notice. A Baptist, Latourette had fellowship with Roman Catholics, Evangelicals and those in the ecumenical movement. His first comprehensive history was written from 1920 onwards with ecumenical vision and intention. Winter's chapter offers a useful addition through an interpretative survey of the years 1950 to 1975. He appreciates Latourette's irenic and global perspective and seeks to reproduce it. His illustrative parallels are thought-provoking. Two supplementary bibliographies are included, listing books printed since 1950. [p. 154](#)

## **Journal Survey (1976)**

*A Selection of Three Evangelical Journals from North America*



## **Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society**

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### *Publications Referred to in This Issue*

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#### **Bibliotheca Sacra**

One year \$5.50, 2 years \$10, 5 years \$20, single issues \$1–25, from Dallas Theological Seminary, 3909 Swiss Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75204, U.S.A.

#### **Christian Graduate**

Annual subscription for non-UCCF members: £1.20, from UCCF, 38 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GP, U.K.

#### **Churchman**

£5 or \$8.50 (£4 in U.K. and special rate for theological students), single issues £0.95, from Church Book Room Press, 7 Wine Office Court, London EC4A 3DA, U.K.

#### **Evangelical Missions Quarterly**

\$7 (bulk rates on request), single issues \$1.75, from Box 794, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, U.S.A.

#### **Evangelical Quarterly**

£3.40 or \$9, from Paternoster Press Ltd., 3 Mount Radford Crescent, Exeter EX2 4JW, U.K. or Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Avenue S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49502, U.S.A.

#### **Grove Booklets**

Published at irregular intervals: 20 titles to date. Price £0.30–£0.35 per title, from Grove Booklets, Bramcote, Notts, U.K.

**International Review of Mission**

\$9, £3.80 or Sfr. 27.50, single issues \$2.80, £1.20 or Sfr. 8.50, from WCC, 150 route do Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland, or WCC Office, Room 440, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027, U.S.A., or British Council of Churches, 10 Eaton Gate, Sloane Square, London SW1, U.K.

**Incite**

No longer published, but single back-issues may be available from Incite, Heidebeek, Heerde, Holland at \$0.75, £0.40 or f2 each. **p. 160**

**Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society**

\$8.50, single issues \$2.25, from Mr. S. J. Kistemaker, Reformed Theological Seminary, 5422 Clinton Boulevard, Jackson, Mississippi 39209, U.S.A.

**Occasional Bulletin**

Subscriptions on a calendar year basis only—\$6 (bulk rates on request), single issues \$3, from Publications Office, Overseas Ministries Study Center, PO Box 2057, Ventnor, New Jersey 08406, U.S.A.

**Occasional Essays**

Published *three* times a year—information and subscriptions from CELEP, Apdo 1307, San Jose, Costa Rica, Central America.

**Scottish Journal of Theology**

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